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The World's Best Game Studios

2011 Edition

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ABOUT THE DEVELOP 100

The 2011 *Develop 100* in association with Metacritic ranks the 100 best games studios in the world based on the critical reception to all games released during calendar year 2010

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INTRODUCTION

CRITICAL SUCCESS

Develop editor-in-chief Michael French examines the trends highlighted by this year's Develop 100

Who are the best games studios in the world? Who makes the best games? Who gets the most plaudits? Who deserves the kudos?

That last question is one we have tried to answer with every annual version of the *Develop 100*.

Whether based on the now-narrower retail sales data or our own confident judgement, the previous six editions have highlighted star performers across global games development.

Nintendo. Ubisoft Montreal. Traveller's Tales. EA Canada. Infinity Ward. Bungie. Yuke's. Rockstar North. Big studios, both in-house and independent, have formed the bulk of our listings.

But in an evolving market, where microstudios and bedroom coders are seeing a renaissance, a more universal metric is needed.

This year we are using Metacritic data as the backbone for the *Develop 100*. That means for the first time digital content has a part to play in this widely-read list, as do mobile and smartphone games.

By looking at the critical reception around the 1,600+ games released last year, using the trusted, respected and sometimes controversial data tracked and monitored by Metacritic, we are able to really boil

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down to that first question: Who are the best games studios in the world? This year, we've answered that question by polling the thousands of reviews published in 2010.

>>

The result, which begins on page 14, makes for really surprising reading.

A few spoilers: One of those big studios named above scores the top spot. But so too do a swathe of studios that would have otherwise been left out of a retail revenues ranking, yet nevertheless are turning heads and rewriting the rules of the games industry.

Overall, this is a more diverse *Develop 100* than ever – and rightly so given the state of play in games development right now.

Half the list comprises of studios that have built a reputation for themselves and their brands through Apple's iPhone/iPad App Store and its rivals – the rest comprise of studios using retail releases or console-based digital distribution to grow or establish themselves.

It's also the most geographically mixed listing we've ever published. 19 countries are represented in the ranking this year. Core games industry markets like USA, Japan, Canada and the UK are of course represented (with North American development teams taking up over a third of the ranking).

However emerging markets and new hubs for games development are emerging. Teams from India, Slovakia, Spain, New Zealand, Czech Republic and Russia are in the list, as are multiple teams from Australia, South Korea, Norway France, Austria, Germany, Sweden, Finland and Denmark.

And as this is a snapshot of all the games released in the previous calendar year, this is a genuine reflection of where the industry is right now.

We've only taken 2010 releases into account, this is not a historical ranking. So while the top developers of all time according to Metacritic include Blizzard, Nintendo, Valve and BioWare, not all of them feature in the *Develop 100*.

That last point exemplifies one of the wider trends in the industry that this more progressive *Develop 100* speaks to. Big studios missing from the ranking this year include BioWare and Ubisoft Montreal, two of the most respected publisher-owned superstudios responsible for two of the biggest 2010 games – *Mass Effect 2* and *Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood*.

Unfortunately, they are also between them responsible for some sub-standard DLC, and some averagely-received licensed games. An aggregate system taking the average across the review scores for all those releases pushes them down the ranking and out of the *Develop 100*.

That will be sad news for the hundreds of staff at those studios and their similar-sized contemporaries. But in the age of the iPhone developer, the message couldn't be clearer; the move to smaller and single-man teams has redressed the balance.

Large monolithic structures are great for job security and commercial reward, but credit is shared for good or ill. You can't hide in big faceless publisher-owned studios if you want glory. The good or bad work of your colleagues – whether they are sat next to you, on another floor, or at an office in another state all

>>

INTRODUCTION

CRITICAL SUCCESS

>> working for the same development studio 'brand' – will have as much impact on the credit you can claim as your own will.

However, do note that it's not just a handful of larger studios that will be been victim of the simple if brutal aggregation of stats. Other big commercial players with smaller team stature, such as *Angry Birds* creator Rovio Mobile (one of the big winners in the iPhone boom), are missing from the list due to their review averages falling out of our top 100's ultimate 81 per cent threshhold.

And that touches on the second major gaming trend that the *Develop 100* reflects – the rise of mobile gaming and the resultant fundamental widening of the market (and in some respects redefinition of gaming).

Metacritic didn't add reviews of iOS products until March this year, but its data and results track back to releases over the last few years. The inclusion of this data with the 'traditional' console world here in the *Develop 100* makes for sobering reading. As previously stated, half the studios in the list make it here due to the excellence of their iPhone or iPad games.

To some, this may be a flaw to our ranking, but it only underlines the migration to digital delivery that developers have loved. That said, iPhone reviews are still a nascent field in the criticism of games – the *Touch Arcade*s and *Pocket Gamer*s of the world are far younger and less established than the *IGN*s and *GameSpot*s that have been running for years and have been key to Metacritic's averages. But they are no less relevant, and neither is their critiques of games.

The predominance of iOS games sends out another interesting message about IP and gameplay mechanics too. iOS games are often more immediate and pure in their content and interactions they demand – a telling sign in the post-Wii era of touchscreens and camera-based tracking peripherals.

Indeed, download games (regardless of platform) may seem a risk commercially, but a risk with greater reward than the calculated 'risk' of a publisher's sanity checked new IP. Almost all the digital download games in our 100 ranking are original properties, and not the over-exposed franchises we've seen over and over. That's not to say well-established game series are missing from the list, but more often than not big brands and licences mean quick commercial rewards and less critical success. Here, the *Develop 100* proves that good ideas are rewarded with critical kudos. Being able to point that out in a year where 2011's new IPs – such as *L.A. Noire* and *Bulletstorm* – have been commercial and critical gangbusters is as rewarding for us as a place on the 100 is for the studios in this book.

Ultimately, this industry is changing quicker than ever – and the *Develop 100* reflects that. With a wider sample of studios, games, countries, formats and ideas reflected in the 100 studio profiles beginning on page 14, I'm sure you will agree.
Michael French, Editor-in-Chief, Develop

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Harbour of the Gaming Industry

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Germany's Top Gaming Business Network.

500 vacancies in Hamburg

GAMECITY: HAMBURG GREETS THE BRITISH GAMES INDUSTRY

The Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg is continuously expanding its lead as Germany's top digital games industry location. Today, close to 150 companies with approximately 3,000 full-time employees are active in the 'games value chain'. Hamburg became aware of the computer gaming trend early on and in 2003 started gamecity:Hamburg, a public-private partnership for sector-targeted support. Since the inception of our network the local games industry has grown by 15 per cent on average each year. More than 500 advertised job vacancies impressively illustrate the industry's potential in Germany's second-largest city.

Yet further growth critically depends on two factors: international trade relations, and creative talent with innovative business ideas and game concepts. Hamburg has maintained close business ties with Great Britain for more than 400 years – a natural thing for the city considered to be the 'most British' in Germany. Thus, it is a logical step for us to collaborate with *Develop 100*, the most comprehensive gaming industry guide in the UK and the world.

Heavyweights from Hamburg like Bigpoint, Innogames and Gamigo have built operations spanning the globe. And there are more startups waiting in the wings. What unites them all is their need for new business partners and creative minds. 500 open positions in Hamburg present both an opportunity and a risk: It is the opportunity for game designers and programmers from Britain, Europe and overseas to have a flourishing career in Hamburg. And there is the risk of growth being stunted if our rising stars are not successful in recruiting international talent.

gamecity:Hamburg provides the most wide-ranging assistance possible to support the local industry's internationalisation and recruitment efforts. That is why expanding our network is crucial. With 1,800 stakeholders from 1,000 different companies all over Europe, we are Germany's No.1 games industry network. We address computer, console and mobile game developers and producers, as well as related industries such as advertising, technical service providers, online agencies, and music and film production enterprises. Our network helps companies to establish cooperation agreements and break into new markets on their own. In addition, we support the local industry by providing a broad range of services including start-up consulting, industry meetings, joint trade show appearances, affordable office space and training programmes such as our Games master's degree programme offered in cooperation with the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences.

As the prime partner for the games industry in Hamburg, we would like to establish a direct dialogue with you. Please contact us if you are seeking new business partners or are considering a career move to Hamburg. With a population of more than 1.8 million, Hamburg is an international seaport that has much more to offer than just a booming games sector. When the workday is over this city will thrill you with its richly varied arts and music scene, culinary delights and dazzling nightlife.

We look forward to being in touch with you soon.

Stefan Klein (Hamburg@work)
Achim Quinke (Quinke Networks)
Managing Directors of gamecity:Hamburg

Stefan Klein (*above left*) and Achim Quinke (*above right*), managing directors of gamecity:Hamburg.

Find out more about gamecity:Hamburg at www.gamecity-hamburg.com.

Additional information about the industry initiative Hamburg@work is provided at www.hamburg-media.net.

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www.quinke.com

METACRITIC – KEEPING SCORE OF ENTERTAINMENT

When it comes to entertainment, Metacritic has become the go-to source for those looking to stay in-the-know on the best games. Metacritic has been generating Metascores™ for games since its launch in January 2001, and of all entertainment consumers, gamers have most enthusiastically embraced Metacritic and the guidance we offer. Gamers look to Metacritic before making final purchasing or rental decisions. Whether this is due to the high price of games in relation to movies or albums, or the serious time commitment that gamers anticipate when contemplating a game purchase, Metacritic users are unique in their voracious appetite for insight and education about the quality of products they consume.

The Metascore™ – The Definitive Entertainment Scorecard

The heart of what we offer – the Metascore™ – is a critical consensus of the top games critics in the world surrounding each game released. The Metascore™ consists of a proprietary formula that curates the opinions of the most respected critics, distilling them down to a single, easy-to-understand number. Our team spends countless hours annually making sure that we track the critics who are the most esteemed in the gaming community, have strong reputations for scoring integrity, and have displayed excellence in critical analysis.

Beyond gamers, Metacritic has, in recent years, been strongly embraced by the gaming press, industry analysts, and gaming publishers as a tool to assess the relative quality of each new game release. Rather than relying solely on sales figures, verifiable game quality has become part of the conversation when assessing the success of a given game. While the games industry has adopted the Metascore™ as an indispensible tool, it is important to reiterate that Metacritic's target audience has always been the consumer (the gamer) contemplating and investigating the best use of his or her hard-earned entertainment cash. Metacritic remains focused on the gamer and discovering those critics who can offer the best collective advice on which games to play.

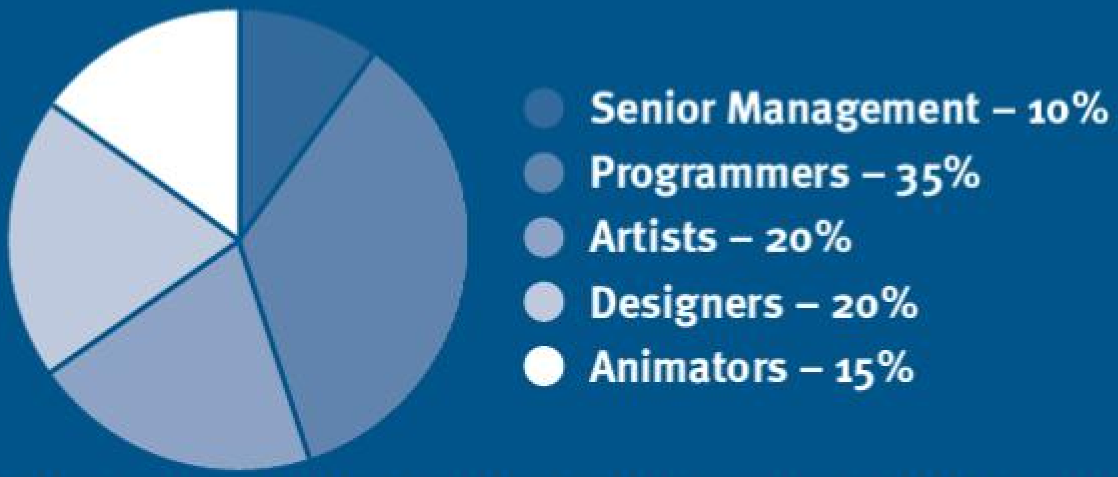
Recognising Innovation

In recent months, Metacritic has added an iOS section to our games offerings to better serve those iPhone and iPad owners who have come to view their mobile devices as legitimate gaming platforms that can compete with dedicated portable gaming systems. Many smaller iOS developers are recognised for their outstanding achievements in the following pages alongside many of the well-established giants of the industry. Hopefully this will inspire more creative people, who might not have tremendous financial backing, to pursue their development dreams in this or other burgeoning markets.

Marc Doyle
Metacritic Co-Founder & Games Editor
www.metacritic.com

Marc Doyle, co-founder and games editor at Metacritic

Placements we've made by discipline



the Unreal engine
has been used to power

208

games since 1998

Starcraft
was the first video game
sent into space in

1969

id software has won

1

emmy for their work
on their user modifiable
game – Quake

JOHN DIMAGGIO (THE VOICE
OF FUTURAMA'S BENDER)
FEATURES IN:

40

GAMES INCLUDING HALO 3,
COD 4 AND GEARS OF WAR

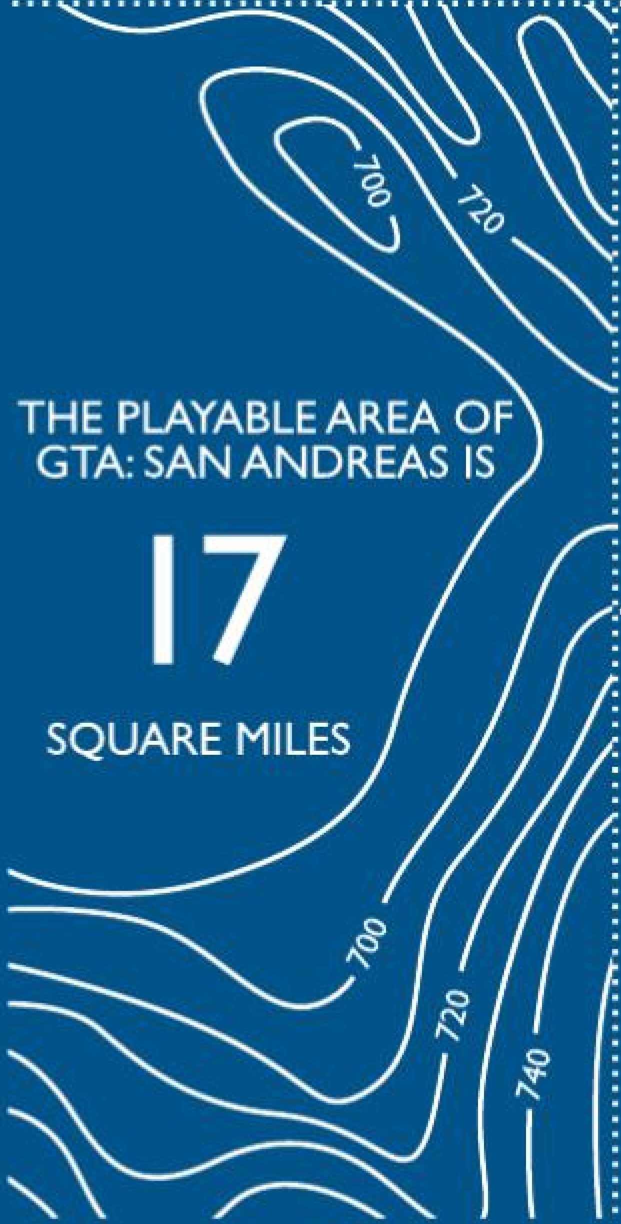
50%

of disc space on
the Elder Scrolls IV:
Oblivion
is taken up with dialogue

CALL OF DUTY 4:
MODERN WARFARE HAS OVER

★ **13** ★
MILLION

PLAYERS ON XBOX LIVE ALONE



THE PLAYABLE AREA OF
GTA: SAN ANDREAS IS

17

SQUARE MILES

The Gran Turismo HD demo was
the first 'full high-definition'
racing game – originally
released in December 2006

Number of countries
we have reach to:

13

Top MMO games played
by amiqus staff:

1. WOW
2. Starcraft 2
3. League of Legends
4. Black Ops
5. Fifa 11

Nintendogs has sold over

22 million

copies worldwide

1992
saw the first
go kart based
game released
– Mario Kart

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<fact>
<description>
Number of Amiqus
consultants who
are involved
in modding:
</description>
<value>
2
</value>
</fact>
```

The longest racing game marathon lasted

30

hours

Amiqus staff spend an average of

£46.70

on games each month

Quake was the first true

3D

game engine

Tom Clancy has

127

games under his name

amiqus

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01

NINTENDO EAD TOKYO

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Super Mario Galaxy 2 (Wii) 97

ABOUT NINTENDO EAD TOKYO

Formed: 2004
In-house (Owned by Nintendo)
Location: Tokyo, Japan
www.nintendo.co.jp

Also famous for:
Super Mario Galaxy (Wii) 97
Donkey Kong Jungle Beat (GameCube) 80

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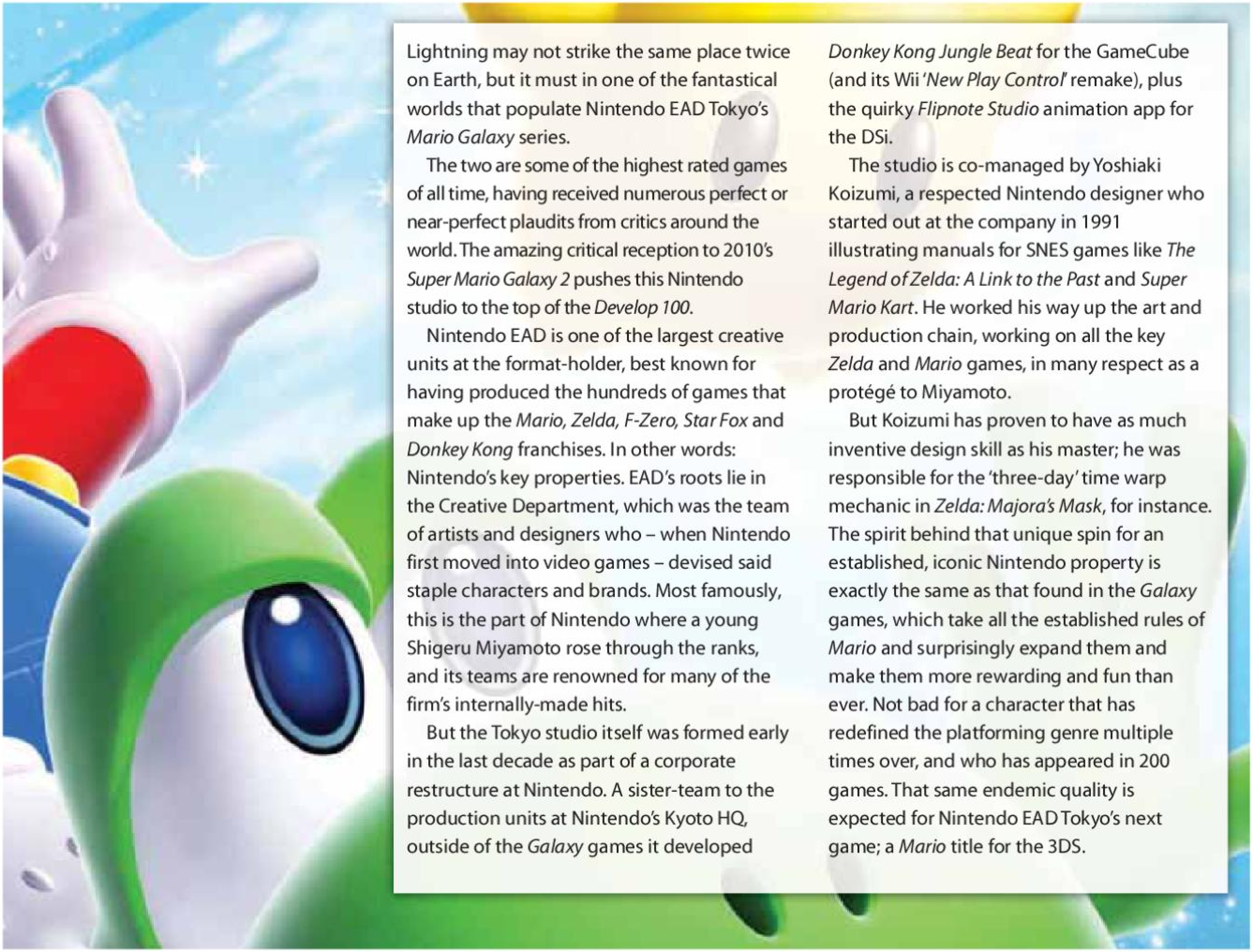


Lightning may not strike the same place twice on Earth, but it must in one of the fantastical worlds that populate Nintendo EAD Tokyo's *Mario Galaxy* series.

The two are some of the highest rated games of all time, having received numerous perfect or near-perfect plaudits from critics around the world. The amazing critical reception to 2010's *Super Mario Galaxy 2* pushes this Nintendo studio to the top of the *Develop 100*.

Nintendo EAD is one of the largest creative units at the format-holder, best known for having produced the hundreds of games that make up the *Mario, Zelda, F-Zero, Star Fox* and *Donkey Kong* franchises. In other words: Nintendo's key properties. EAD's roots lie in the Creative Department, which was the team of artists and designers who – when Nintendo first moved into video games – devised said staple characters and brands. Most famously, this is the part of Nintendo where a young Shigeru Miyamoto rose through the ranks, and its teams are renowned for many of the firm's internally-made hits.

But the Tokyo studio itself was formed early in the last decade as part of a corporate restructure at Nintendo. A sister-team to the production units at Nintendo's Kyoto HQ, outside of the *Galaxy* games it developed *Donkey Kong Jungle Beat* for the GameCube (and its Wii '*New Play Control*' remake), plus the quirky *Flipnote Studio* animation app for the DSi.

The studio is co-managed by Yoshiaki Koizumi, a respected Nintendo designer who started out at the company in 1991 illustrating manuals for SNES games like *The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past* and *Super Mario Kart*. He worked his way up the art and production chain, working on all the key *Zelda* and *Mario* games, in many respect as a protégé to Miyamoto.

But Koizumi has proven to have as much inventive design skill as his master; he was responsible for the 'three-day' time warp mechanic in *Zelda: Majora's Mask*, for instance. The spirit behind that unique spin for an established, iconic Nintendo property is exactly the same as that found in the *Galaxy* games, which take all the established rules of *Mario* and surprisingly expand them and make them more rewarding and fun than ever. Not bad for a character that has redefined the platforming genre multiple times over, and who has appeared in 200 games. That same endemic quality is expected for Nintendo EAD Tokyo's next game; a *Mario* title for the 3DS.

02

2D BOY

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

World of Goo HD (iOS) 96

ABOUT 2D BOY

Founded: 2006
Independent
Location: San Francisco, California, USA
www.2dboy.com

Also famous for:
World of Goo (PC) 90
World of Goo (WiiWare) 94

2D Boy's vaulting straight to second place of the *Develop 100* is the perfect example of how Apple's iOS platforms have served small teams. The two-man outfit's iPad release of signature IP *World of Goo* is to thank for this second-place in the list – the game was met with universal praise when released last year.

But while studio founders Kyle Gabler and Ron Carmel are poster boys for the indie gaming uprising – indeed, they self-describe themselves as being on the 'front lines' of this revolution – they cut their teeth at the corporate daddy of games, Electronic Arts. Gabler worked as designer and prototyper for Maxis while Carmel was a developer for EA's casual games portal Pogo.

They left EA to go solo, however, in 2006. In hindsight the Electronic Arts confine was never going to hold them for long – their interests lay much beyond the commercially-safe work at the publisher; Gabler was one of the team behind the respected Experimental Gameplay Project while Carmel had previously developed visual FX software and haptic simulations.

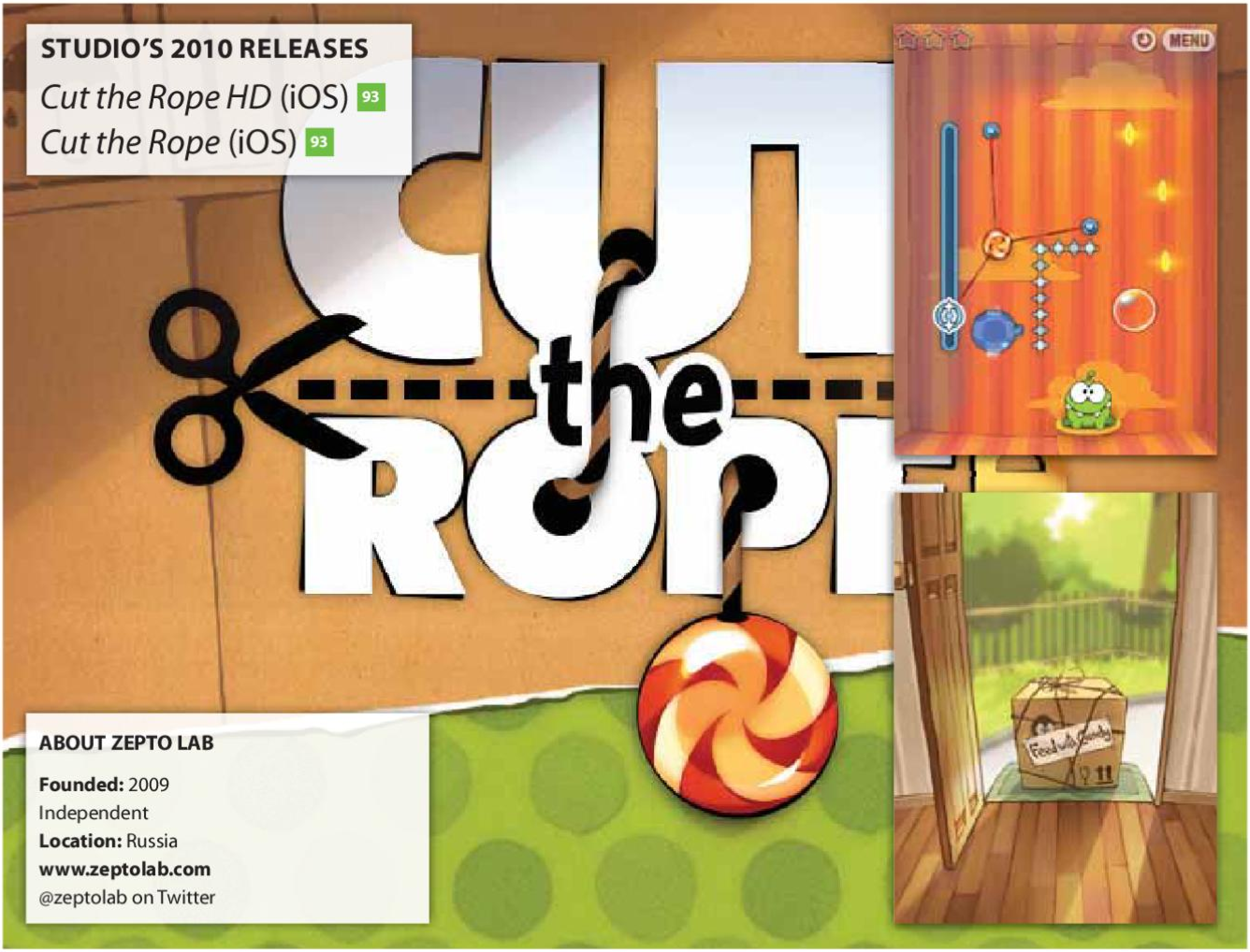
Those diverse work/life interests all came together in the studio's first game, *World of Goo*. Released simultaneously on PC and Wii to much acclaim, the title also scored plenty of praise from indie games festival judges, and also taught many a thing or two about digital distribution; Carmel and Gabler ran a one-year-anniversary 'pay what you want' offer which allowed players to choose their own price for the game. The limited time deal didn't just boost awareness of the game and widen its audience, it also proved illuminating to the rest of the industry – the pair released stacks of stats about consumers' behaviour afterwards, helping flesh out views and knowledge of the burgeoning digital market.

World of Goo, in which players pull and distort black sticky gloop to solve puzzles, naturally found a home in late 2010 on iPad and its large touchscreen. It's one of the highest rated games for the device ever. This year, the game debuted on iPhone, too, again to rapturous reviews.

Not much is known about if/when 2D Boy will release a new game, with efforts centred on *Goo* and its ports, plus more general philanthropic work for the rest of the industry – last year, inspired by their successes in indie games, 2D Boy and thatgamecompany teamed up to start the 'Indie Fund' to offer financial support for new studios. Maybe the teams that emerge from that effort will be propping up the 2012 and 2013 editions of this book.

03

ZEPTO LAB


CUT
the
ROPE
MENU
Feed with Candy

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASES

Cut the Rope HD (iOS) 93

Cut the Rope (iOS) 93

ABOUT ZEPTO LAB

Founded: 2009
Independent
Location: Russia
www.zeptolab.com
@zeptolab on Twitter

Zepto Lab's *Cut the Rope* is one of those rare mobile games; it has had genuine, passionate acclaim from reviewers across the board, from core game specialists through to mass market and mobile critics.

Russian studio Zepto Lab was pushed into the spotlight with *Rope*, its second game. The title refined elements of its debut, *Parachute Ninja*, which was published by Freeverse.

During the production of that game, the team experimented with an eventually-aborted rope mechanic – that soon evolved into *Rope's* gameplay, where players cut through strings and dangle sweets and candy into a hungry monster's gaping mouth.

Cut the Rope was brought to market with the help of another iPhone game publisher, Chillingo, which also brought the mainstream hit *Angry Birds* to the market before developer Rovio Mobile decided to take over all the duties for its game.

You could argue that Zepto Lab's place on the list has as much to do with Chillingo as the IP it published. Although the idea of a publisher for a platform that encourages such free self-publishing may seem like anathema to indie developers, Chillingo's efforts have helped turn *Cut the Rope* into a big cultural hit for iOS.

In its first 10 days on the market in October 2010, the game sold 1m units. By the end of the year, the game had been bought three million times in three months. In the sprint, that number had doubled. And it's all thanks to both Chillingo's active marketing and promotion and Zepto Lab's simple but nail biting, gameplay.

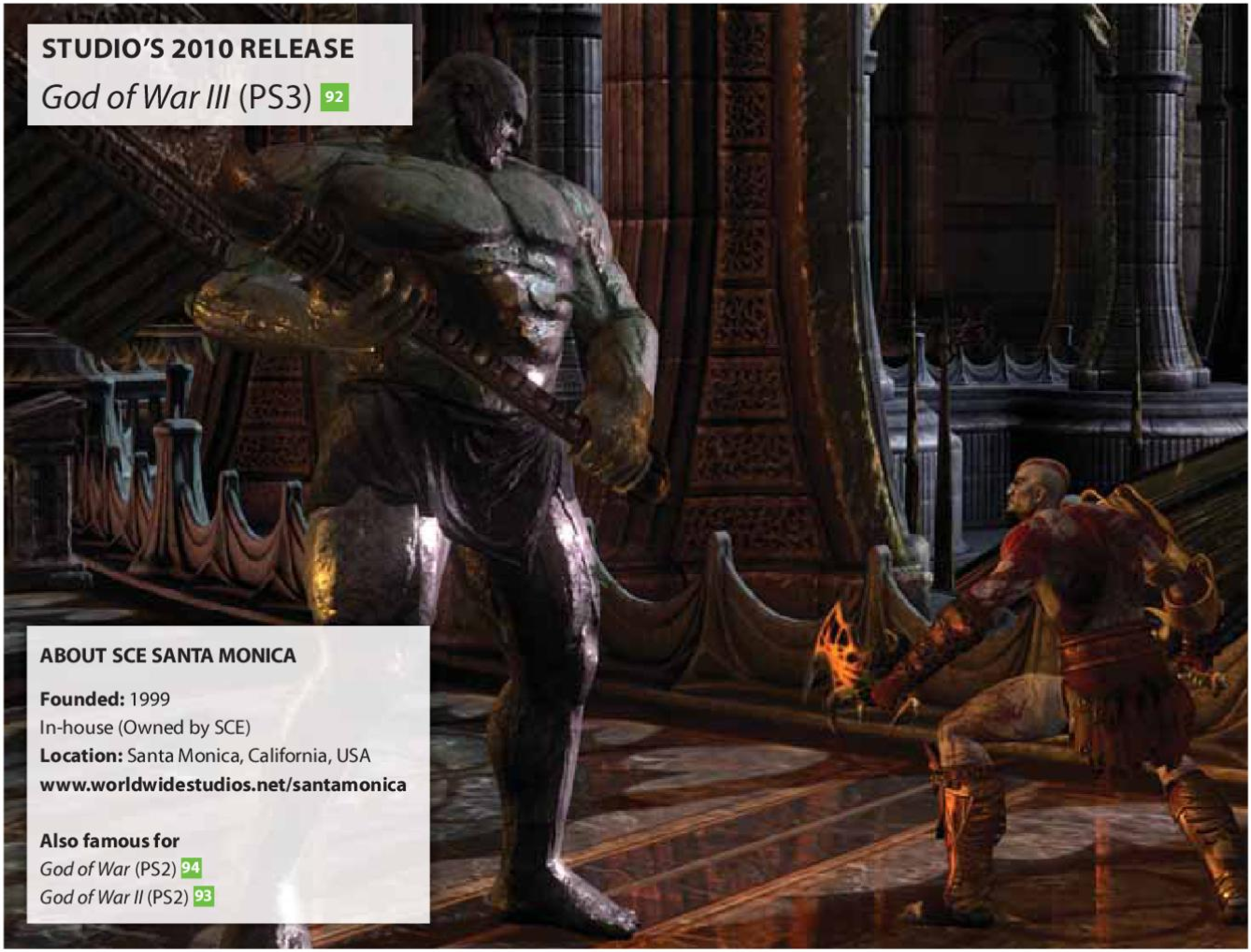
Zepto Lab has kept the game active through regular content updates, with seven 'boxes' of levels deployed over the last nine months.

In that same time, Chillingo has also been acquired by Electronic Arts, forming a bulk of its newer EAi division, dedicated to new platforms and business mobiles in mobile and social – a telling sign of how fast the new world of apps and downloads is already a prime target for the bigger giants of core gaming. Chillingo has already established itself as a publisher with a ken eye for indie star talent, so who knows what studios it may help nurture into shape worthy of the 2012 *Develop 100*.

Next for Zepto Lab, though, is moving beyond iOS. So far its headline game has only been availabke for iPad, iPod Touch and iPhone; an Android version of *Cut The Rope* is on the way later in 2011, and the studio says it has other new IP on the way too.

04

SCE SANTA MONICA



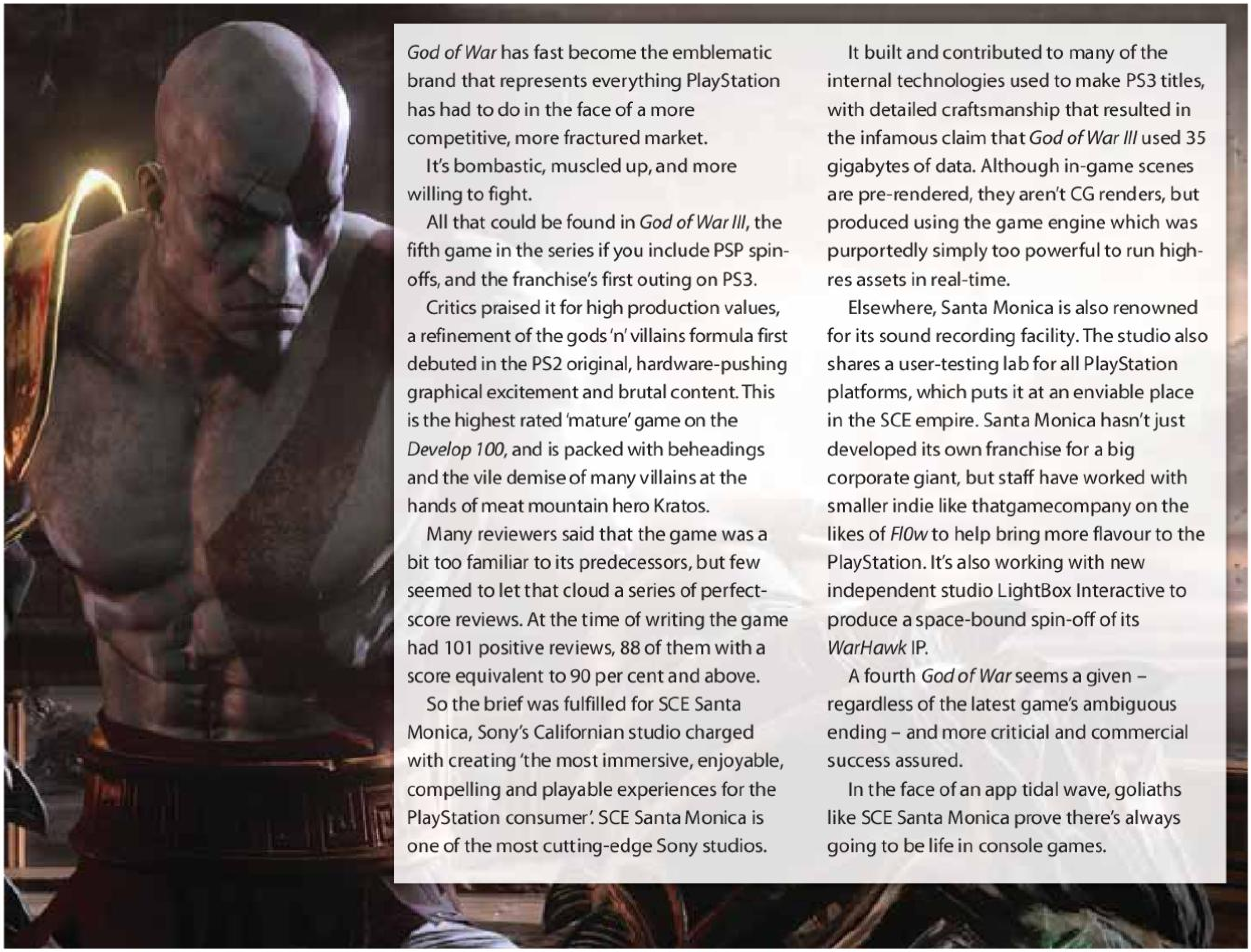
STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

God of War III (PS3) 92

ABOUT SCE SANTA MONICA

Founded: 1999
In-house (Owned by SCE)
Location: Santa Monica, California, USA
www.worldwidestudios.net/santamonica

Also famous for
God of War (PS2) 94
God of War II (PS2) 93



God of War has fast become the emblematic brand that represents everything PlayStation has had to do in the face of a more competitive, more fractured market.

It's bombastic, muscled up, and more willing to fight.

All that could be found in *God of War III*, the fifth game in the series if you include PSP spin-offs, and the franchise's first outing on PS3.

Critics praised it for high production values, a refinement of the gods 'n' villains formula first debuted in the PS2 original, hardware-pushing graphical excitement and brutal content. This is the highest rated 'mature' game on the *Develop 100*, and is packed with beheadings and the vile demise of many villains at the hands of meat mountain hero Kratos.

Many reviewers said that the game was a bit too familiar to its predecessors, but few seemed to let that cloud a series of perfect-score reviews. At the time of writing the game had 101 positive reviews, 88 of them with a score equivalent to 90 per cent and above.

So the brief was fulfilled for SCE Santa Monica, Sony's Californian studio charged with creating 'the most immersive, enjoyable, compelling and playable experiences for the PlayStation consumer'. SCE Santa Monica is one of the most cutting-edge Sony studios.

It built and contributed to many of the internal technologies used to make PS3 titles, with detailed craftsmanship that resulted in the infamous claim that *God of War III* used 35 gigabytes of data. Although in-game scenes are pre-rendered, they aren't CG renders, but produced using the game engine which was purportedly simply too powerful to run high-res assets in real-time.

Elsewhere, Santa Monica is also renowned for its sound recording facility. The studio also shares a user-testing lab for all PlayStation platforms, which puts it at an enviable place in the SCE empire. Santa Monica hasn't just developed its own franchise for a big corporate giant, but staff have worked with smaller indie like thatgamecompany on the likes of *Fl0w* to help bring more flavour to the PlayStation. It's also working with new independent studio LightBox Interactive to produce a space-bound spin-off of its *WarHawk* IP.

A fourth *God of War* seems a given – regardless of the latest game's ambiguous ending – and more criticial and commercial success assured.

In the face of an app tidal wave, goliaths like SCE Santa Monica prove there's always going to be life in console games.

05 BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT

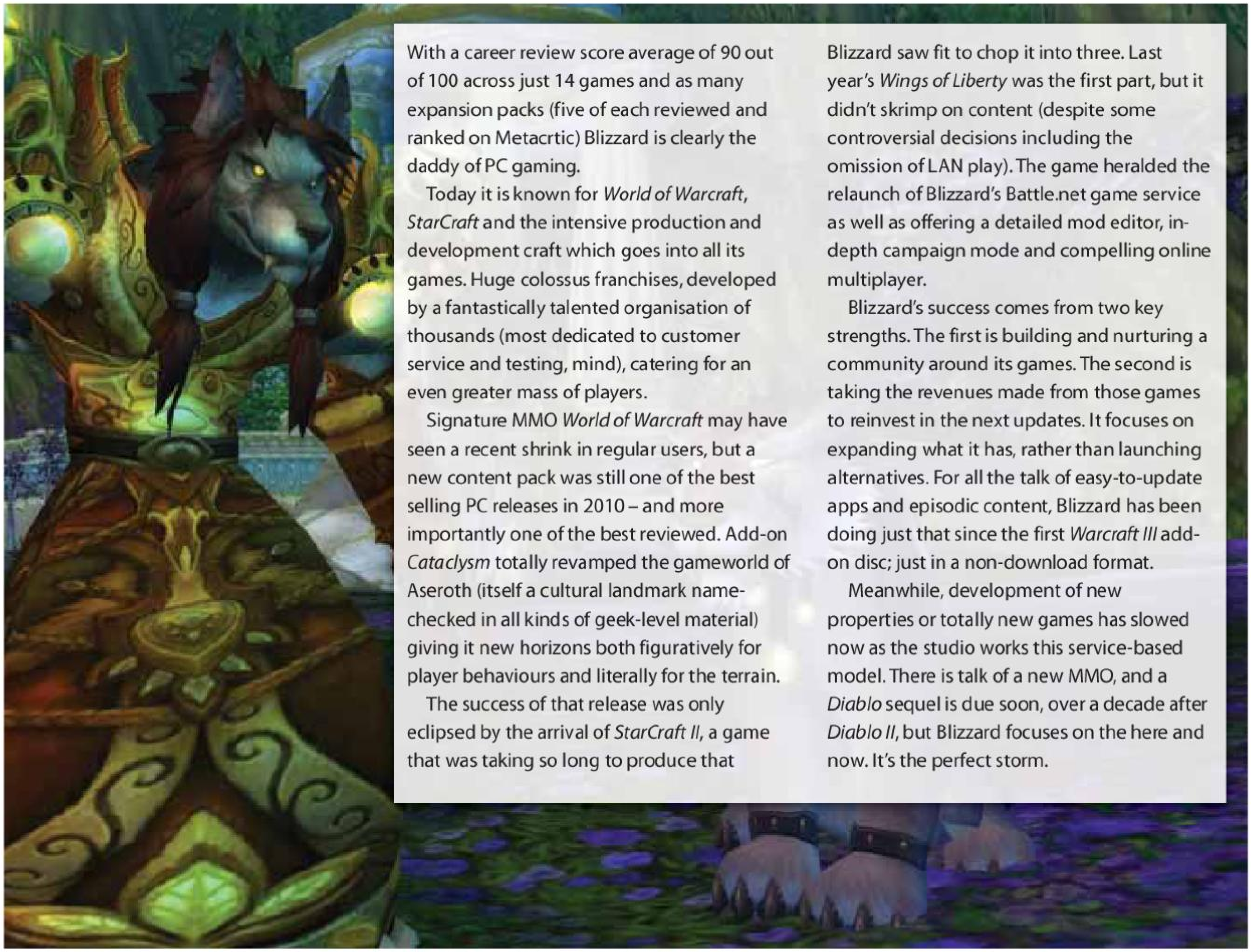
STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASES

StarCraft II: Wings of Liberty (PC) 93
World of Warcraft: Cataclysm (PC) 90

ABOUT BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT

Founded: 1991 (as Silicon & Synapse, rebranded to Blizzard Entertainment in 1994)
In-house (Owned by Activision Blizzard)
Location: Irvine, California, USA
www.blizzard.com

Also famous for
Diablo (PC) 94
World of Warcraft (PC) 93



With a career review score average of 90 out of 100 across just 14 games and as many expansion packs (five of each reviewed and ranked on Metacrtic) Blizzard is clearly the daddy of PC gaming.

Today it is known for *World of Warcraft*, *StarCraft* and the intensive production and development craft which goes into all its games. Huge colossus franchises, developed by a fantastically talented organisation of thousands (most dedicated to customer service and testing, mind), catering for an even greater mass of players.

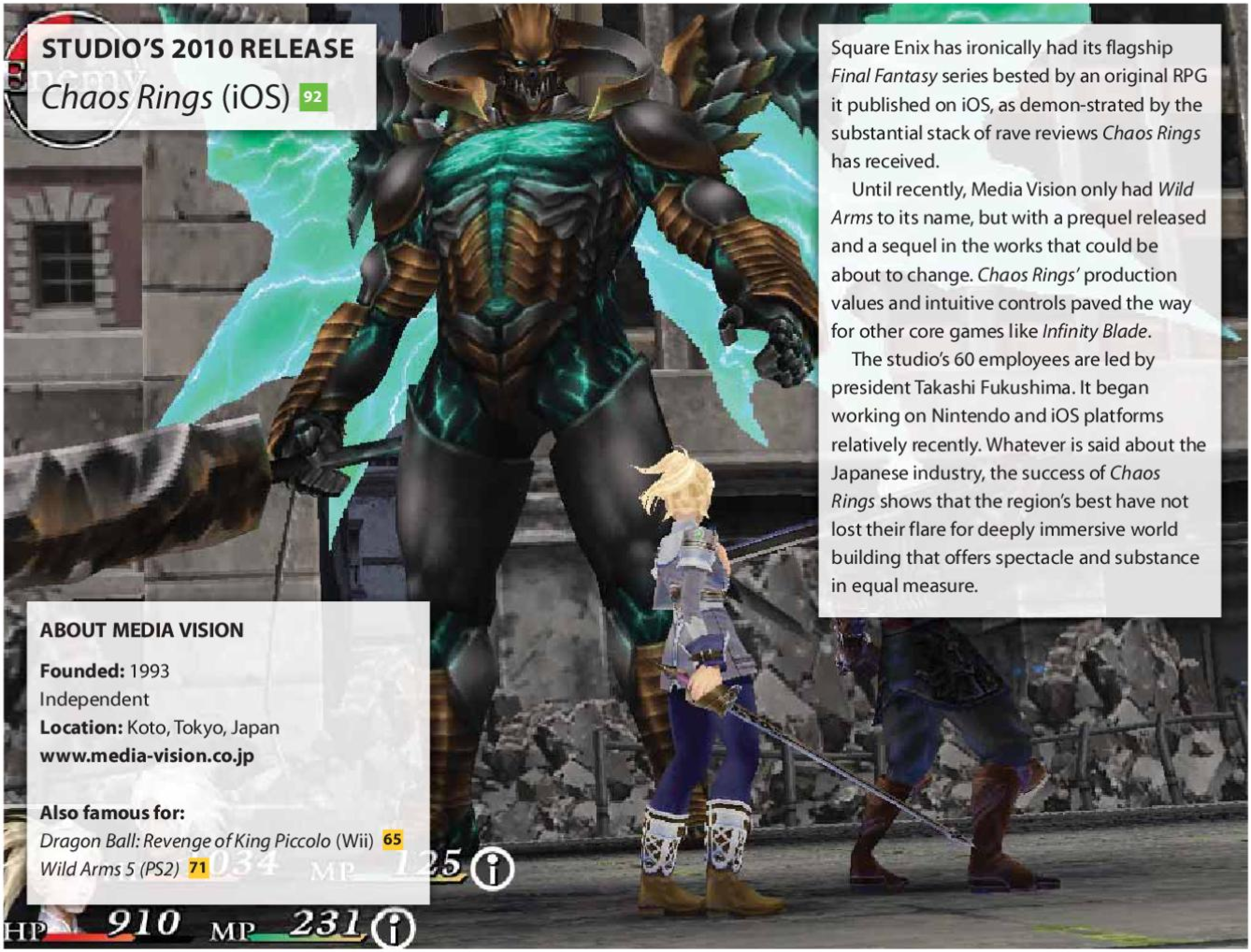
Signature MMO *World of Warcraft* may have seen a recent shrink in regular users, but a new content pack was still one of the best selling PC releases in 2010 – and more importantly one of the best reviewed. Add-on *Cataclysm* totally revamped the gameworld of Aseroth (itself a cultural landmark name-checked in all kinds of geek-level material) giving it new horizons both figuratively for player behaviours and literally for the terrain.

The success of that release was only eclipsed by the arrival of *StarCraft II*, a game that was taking so long to produce that Blizzard saw fit to chop it into three. Last year's *Wings of Liberty* was the first part, but it didn't skrimp on content (despite some controversial decisions including the omission of LAN play). The game heralded the relaunch of Blizzard's Battle.net game service as well as offering a detailed mod editor, in-depth campaign mode and compelling online multiplayer.

Blizzard's success comes from two key strengths. The first is building and nurturing a community around its games. The second is taking the revenues made from those games to reinvest in the next updates. It focuses on expanding what it has, rather than launching alternatives. For all the talk of easy-to-update apps and episodic content, Blizzard has been doing just that since the first *Warcraft III* add-on disc; just in a non-download format.

Meanwhile, development of new properties or totally new games has slowed now as the studio works this service-based model. There is talk of a new MMO, and a *Diablo* sequel is due soon, over a decade after *Diablo II*, but Blizzard focuses on the here and now. It's the perfect storm.

06 MEDIA VISION



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Chaos Rings (iOS) 92

Square Enix has ironically had its flagship *Final Fantasy* series bested by an original RPG it published on iOS, as demon-strated by the substantial stack of rave reviews *Chaos Rings* has received.

Until recently, Media Vision only had *Wild Arms* to its name, but with a prequel released and a sequel in the works that could be about to change. *Chaos Rings'* production values and intuitive controls paved the way for other core games like *Infinity Blade*.

The studio's 60 employees are led by president Takashi Fukushima. It began working on Nintendo and iOS platforms relatively recently. Whatever is said about the Japanese industry, the success of *Chaos Rings* shows that the region's best have not lost their flare for deeply immersive world building that offers spectacle and substance in equal measure.

ABOUT MEDIA VISION

Founded: 1993
Independent
Location: Koto, Tokyo, Japan
www.media-vision.co.jp

Also famous for:
Dragon Ball: Revenge of King Piccolo (Wii) 65
Wild Arms 5 (PS2) 71

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07

1337 GAME DESIGN

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Dark Nebula – Episode Two (iOS) 91

The unstoppable rise of game apps has shaken up the studios in *Develop 100* like never before. And this, a *Marble Madness* inspired game made by one man for the smartphone generation, is proof.

Dark Nebula – Episode Two was the second highest rated iOS game of 2010 based on its Metacritic average at the end of 2010.

1337 Game Design is run by Anders Hejdenberg, an independent game designer from Sweden and former lead multiplayer designer on *Battlefield 2: Modern Combat*. He began his career in the games industry 12 years ago, working as a 3D artist. It's understood that Hejdenberg is currently working on a third *Nebula* game as well as an unannounced project.

ABOUT 1337 GAME DESIGN

Founded: 2009
Independent
Location: Gothenburg, Sweden
www.1337gamedesign.com

Also famous for:
Dark Nebula - Episode One (iOS)

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– *IGN* on *FABLE III*

"THE VOICE ACTING IS ABSOLUTELY PHENOMENAL."
– *Gamespot* on *Dragon Age II*

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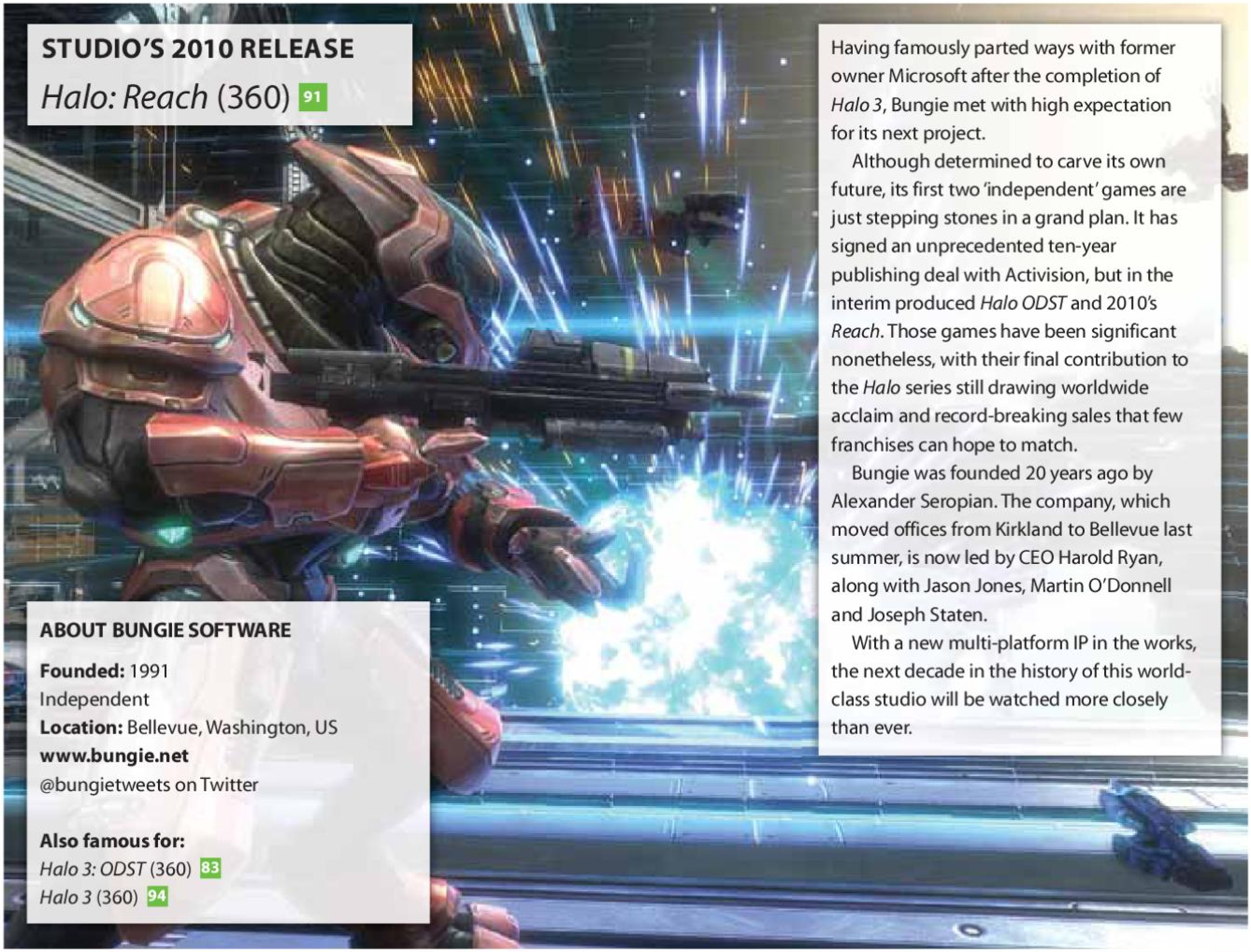
BUNGIE SOFTWARE

08



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Halo: Reach (360) 91

Having famously parted ways with former owner Microsoft after the completion of *Halo 3*, Bungie met with high expectation for its next project.

Although determined to carve its own future, its first two 'independent' games are just stepping stones in a grand plan. It has signed an unprecedented ten-year publishing deal with Activision, but in the interim produced *Halo ODST* and 2010's *Reach*. Those games have been significant nonetheless, with their final contribution to the *Halo* series still drawing worldwide acclaim and record-breaking sales that few franchises can hope to match.

Bungie was founded 20 years ago by Alexander Seropian. The company, which moved offices from Kirkland to Bellevue last summer, is now led by CEO Harold Ryan, along with Jason Jones, Martin O'Donnell and Joseph Staten.

With a new multi-platform IP in the works, the next decade in the history of this world-class studio will be watched more closely than ever.

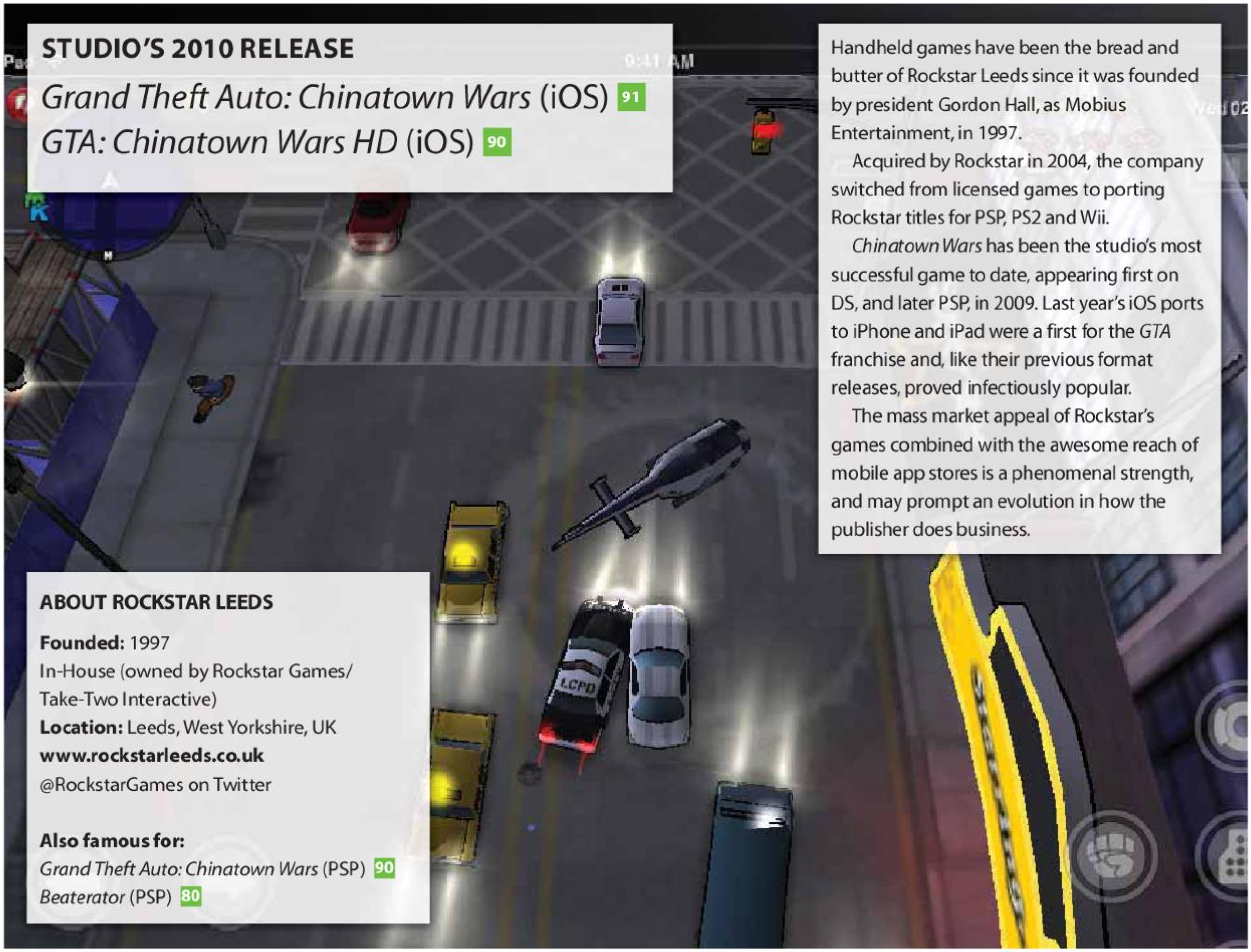
ABOUT BUNGIE SOFTWARE

Founded: 1991
Independent
Location: Bellevue, Washington, US
www.bungie.net
@bungietweets on Twitter

Also famous for:
Halo 3: ODST (360) 83
Halo 3 (360) 94

09

ROCKSTAR LEEDS



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars (iOS) 91
GTA: Chinatown Wars HD (iOS) 90

Handheld games have been the bread and butter of Rockstar Leeds since it was founded by president Gordon Hall, as Mobius Entertainment, in 1997.

Acquired by Rockstar in 2004, the company switched from licensed games to porting Rockstar titles for PSP, PS2 and Wii.

Chinatown Wars has been the studio's most successful game to date, appearing first on DS, and later PSP, in 2009. Last year's iOS ports to iPhone and iPad were a first for the *GTA* franchise and, like their previous format releases, proved infectiously popular.

The mass market appeal of Rockstar's games combined with the awesome reach of mobile app stores is a phenomenal strength, and may prompt an evolution in how the publisher does business.

ABOUT ROCKSTAR LEEDS

Founded: 1997
In-House (owned by Rockstar Games/ Take-Two Interactive)
Location: Leeds, West Yorkshire, UK
www.rockstarleeds.co.uk
@RockstarGames on Twitter

Also famous for:
Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars (PSP) 90
Beaterator (PSP) 80

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dolby.com/games

THE CODING MONKEYS

10

Carcassonne
Solitaire
Game of the Week
Norlonion
Resume L'Aindeion
Random Town
Local
Internet

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Carcassonne (iOS) 91

Simple ideas can often yield the most rewarding gameplay experiences. That's certainly what reviewers saw in *Carcassonne* – an interactive version of a German board game. Successfully translating the depth and variety of a classic board game earned the developers props, but it was an idiot-proof multiplayer connectivity that cemented the social draw that's at the heart of a gaming experience like *Carcassonne*.

This is the first title from the illusive CodingMonkeys, a duo of talented German computer science whizzes that have a soft spot for Mac. Founded by Martin Pittenauer and Dominik Wagner, the duo won several awards as students for their collaborative editing application *SubEthaEdit*.

ABOUT THECODINGMONKEYS

Founded: 2002
Independent
Location: Munich, Germany
www.codingmonkeys.de
@codingmonkeys on Twitter

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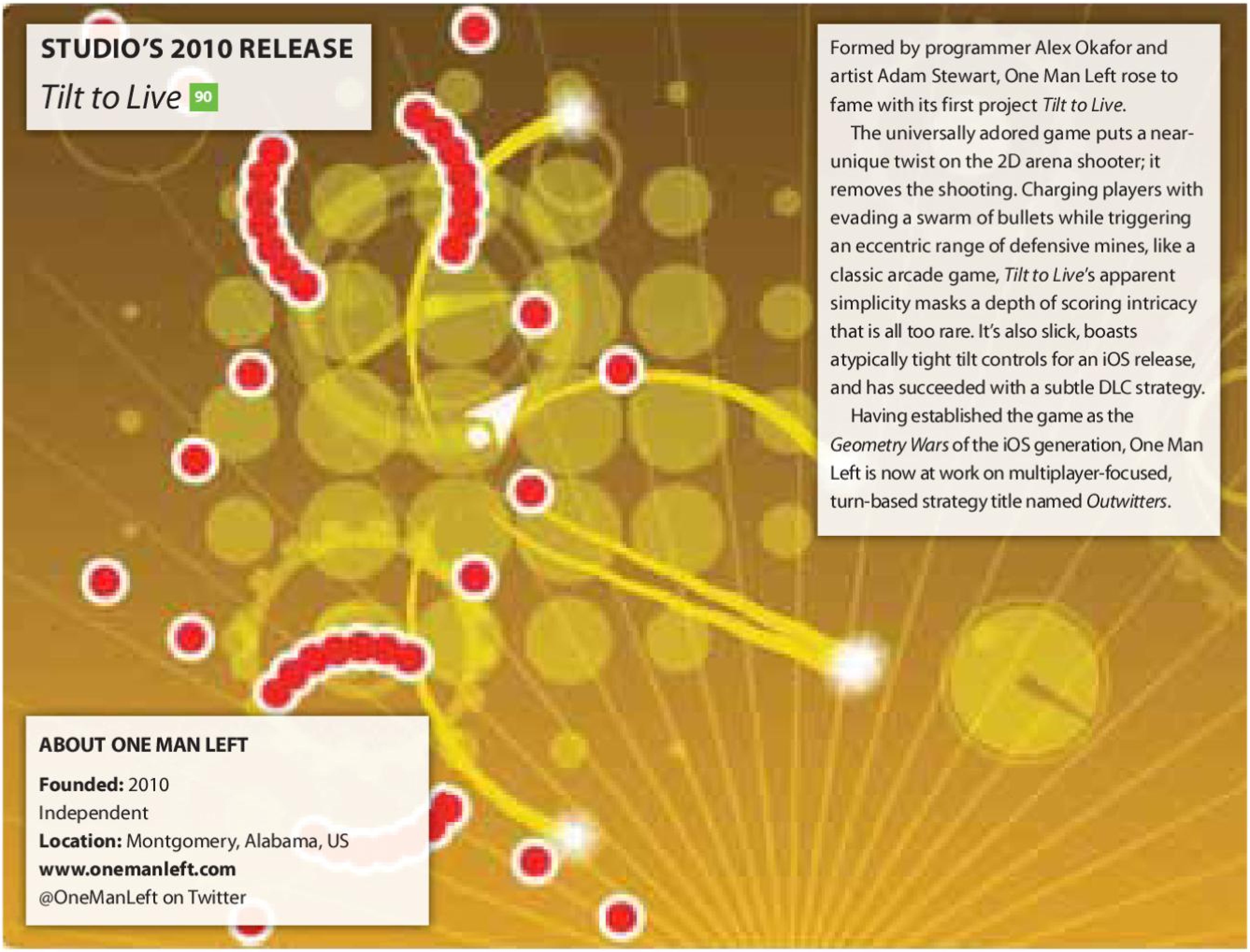
Imagination

ONE MAN LEFT

11



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Tilt to Live 90

Formed by programmer Alex Okafor and artist Adam Stewart, One Man Left rose to fame with its first project *Tilt to Live*.

The universally adored game puts a near-unique twist on the 2D arena shooter; it removes the shooting. Charging players with evading a swarm of bullets while triggering an eccentric range of defensive mines, like a classic arcade game, *Tilt to Live*'s apparent simplicity masks a depth of scoring intricacy that is all too rare. It's also slick, boasts atypically tight tilt controls for an iOS release, and has succeeded with a subtle DLC strategy.

Having established the game as the *Geometry Wars* of the iOS generation, One Man Left is now at work on multiplayer-focused, turn-based strategy title named *Outwitters*.

ABOUT ONE MAN LEFT

Founded: 2010
Independent
Location: Montgomery, Alabama, US
www.onemanleft.com
@OneManLeft on Twitter

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JEAN-FRANÇOIS GEYELIN

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

PewPew 2 (iOS) 90

From a critical point of view, Jean-François Geyelin is one of the most successful one man development outfits on the planet. His iOS arena shooter *PewPew2*, which recently underwent an Android makeover, has met favour with both reviewers and consumers.

Offering frenetic old school action, it struck the delicate balance between familiarity and innovation that every sequel faces with absolute precision.

Geyelin, who programmes while undertaking a Master's degree in computer science, is a shining example of the return of the lone coder, and is already considering his next title, which remains a complete mystery other than the fact that it hopes to offer local multiplayer. If his success proves one thing, it is that mobile-centric microstudios should not forget about the world beyond iOS.

ABOUT JEAN-FRANÇOIS GEYELIN

Debut: 2009
Independent
Location: Singapore, Singapore
www.pewpewgame.blogspot.com

Also famous for:
PewPew (Android, iOS)
PewPew2 (Android)

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PLAYDEAD

13

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Limbo (XBLA) 90

Founded by Arnt Jensen and Dino Patti, PlayDead is the company behind the current darling of XBLA: *Limbo*.

The monochrome platformer, which spawned countless aesthetic copycats, offered a sharp, eerie, and sometimes genuinely unsettling platform game defined by refined design, cunning puzzles and a mysterious ending that continues to fascinate players.

The game's success is such that at the time of writing it was poised for a physical release in a boxed compilation of the best three titles from XBLA.

Little is known of Playdead's next project, other than that it is underway, and has been conceived to appeal to the tastes of those that enjoyed *Limbo*.

ABOUT PLAYDEAD

Founded: 2006
Independent
Location: Copenhagen, Denmark
www.limbogame.org
@PlayDeadGames on Twitter

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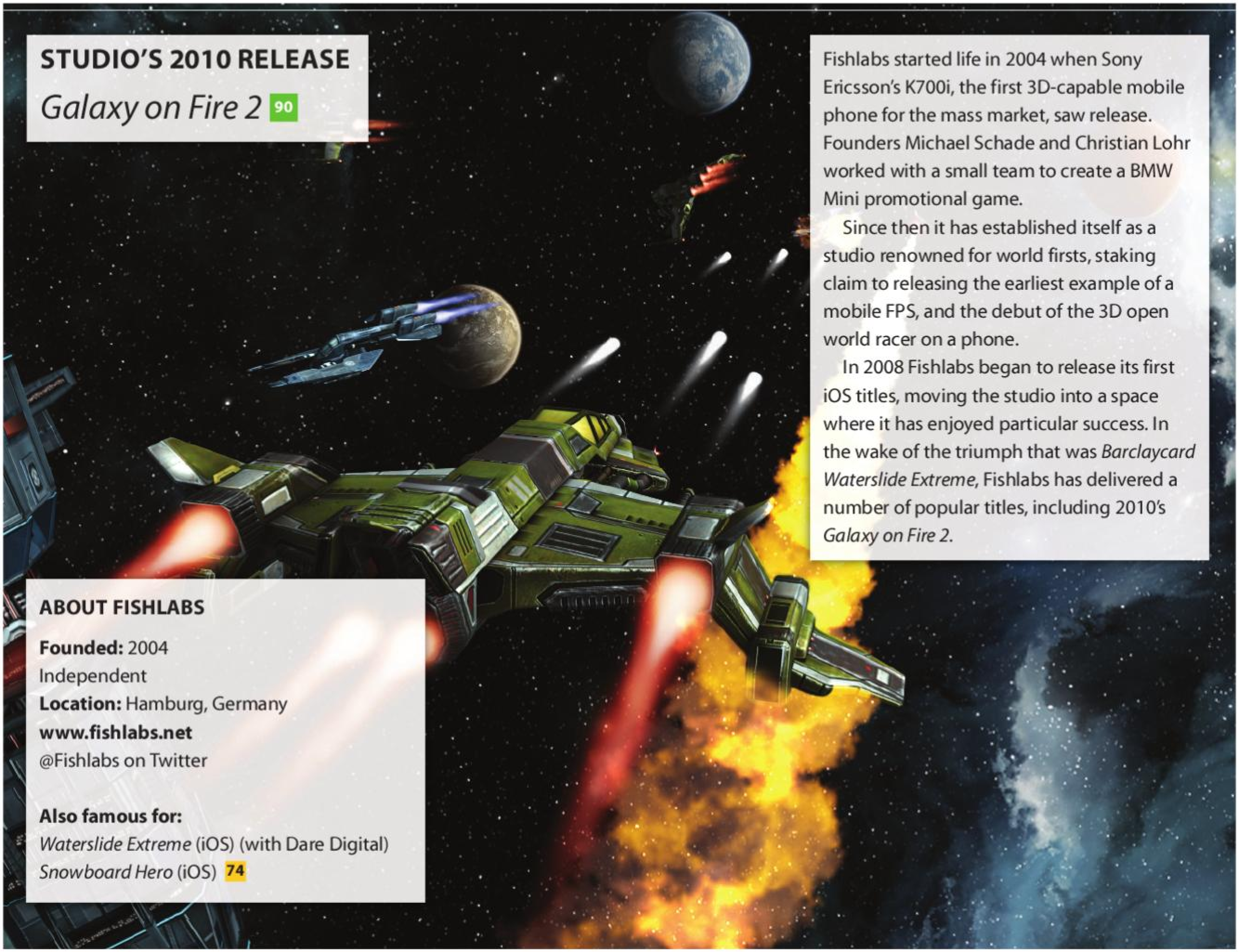
FISHLABS



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Galaxy on Fire 2 90

Fishlabs started life in 2004 when Sony Ericsson's K700i, the first 3D-capable mobile phone for the mass market, saw release. Founders Michael Schade and Christian Lohr worked with a small team to create a BMW Mini promotional game.

Since then it has established itself as a studio renowned for world firsts, staking claim to releasing the earliest example of a mobile FPS, and the debut of the 3D open world racer on a phone.

In 2008 Fishlabs began to release its first iOS titles, moving the studio into a space where it has enjoyed particular success. In the wake of the triumph that was *Barclaycard Waterslide Extreme*, Fishlabs has delivered a number of popular titles, including 2010's *Galaxy on Fire 2*.

ABOUT FISHLABS

Founded: 2004
Independent
Location: Hamburg, Germany
www.fishlabs.net
@Fishlabs on Twitter

Also famous for:
Waterslide Extreme (iOS) (with Dare Digital)
Snowboard Hero (iOS) 74

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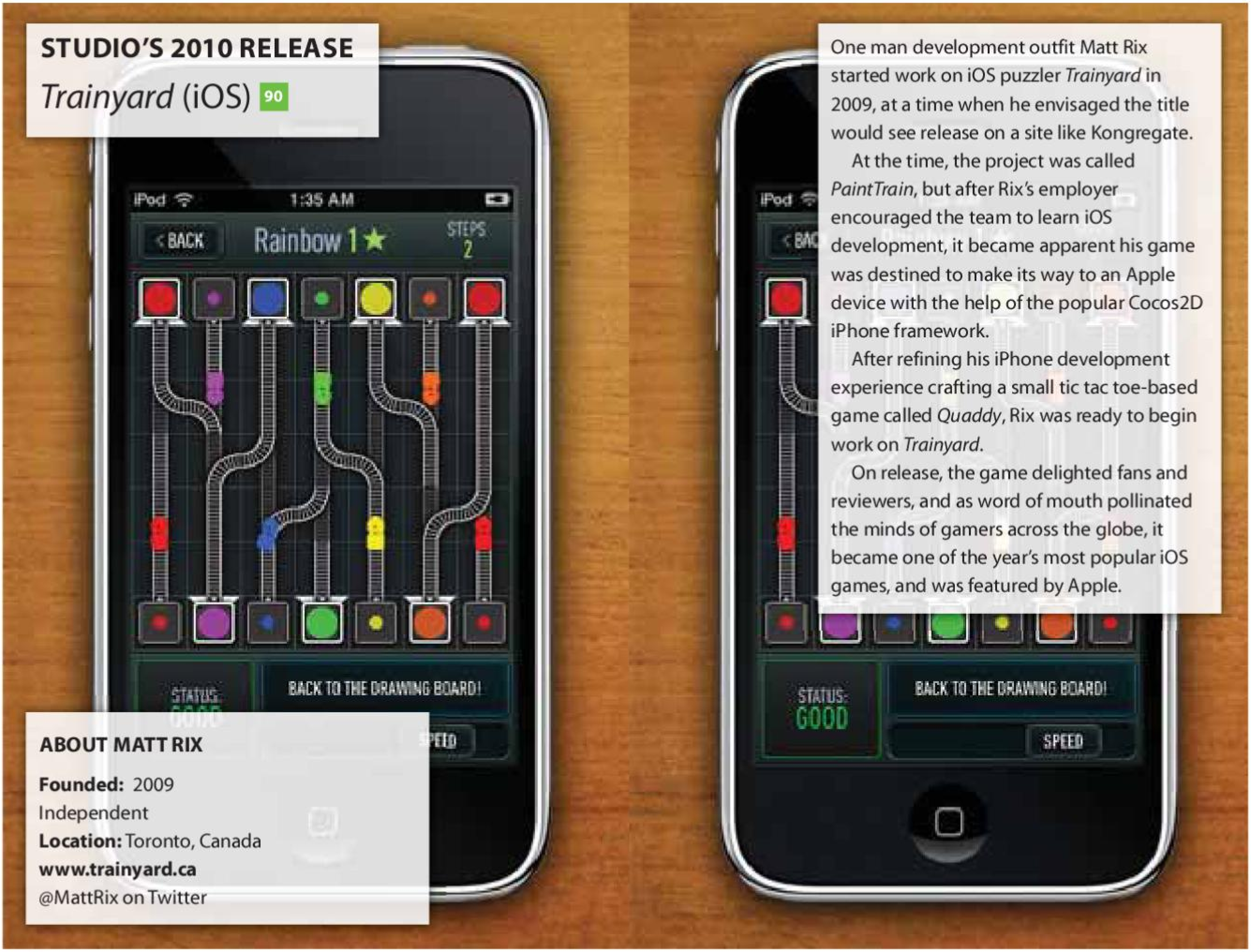
MATT RIX



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Trainyard (iOS) 90

One man development outfit Matt Rix started work on iOS puzzler *Trainyard* in 2009, at a time when he envisaged the title would see release on a site like Kongregate.

At the time, the project was called *PaintTrain*, but after Rix's employer encouraged the team to learn iOS development, it became apparent his game was destined to make its way to an Apple device with the help of the popular Cocos2D iPhone framework.

After refining his iPhone development experience crafting a small tic tac toe-based game called *Quaddy*, Rix was ready to begin work on *Trainyard*.

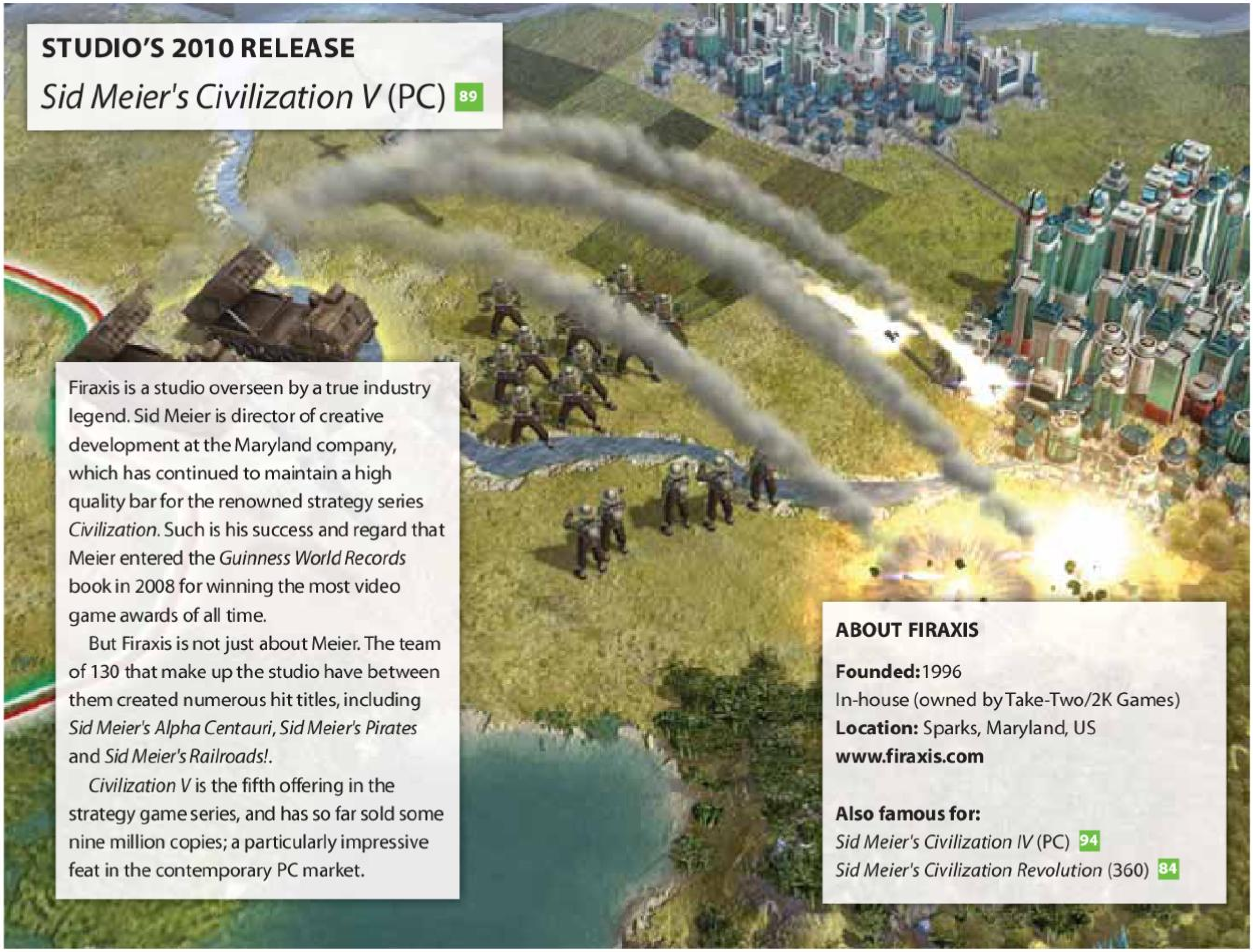
On release, the game delighted fans and reviewers, and as word of mouth pollinated the minds of gamers across the globe, it became one of the year's most popular iOS games, and was featured by Apple.

ABOUT MATT RIX

Founded: 2009
Independent
Location: Toronto, Canada
www.trainyard.ca
@MattRix on Twitter

FIRAXIS

16



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Sid Meier's Civilization V (PC) 89

Firaxis is a studio overseen by a true industry legend. Sid Meier is director of creative development at the Maryland company, which has continued to maintain a high quality bar for the renowned strategy series *Civilization*. Such is his success and regard that Meier entered the *Guinness World Records* book in 2008 for winning the most video game awards of all time.

But Firaxis is not just about Meier. The team of 130 that make up the studio have between them created numerous hit titles, including *Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri*, *Sid Meier's Pirates* and *Sid Meier's Railroads!*.

Civilization V is the fifth offering in the strategy game series, and has so far sold some nine million copies; a particularly impressive feat in the contemporary PC market.

ABOUT FIRAXIS

Founded: 1996
In-house (owned by Take-Two/2K Games)
Location: Sparks, Maryland, US
www.firaxis.com

Also famous for:
Sid Meier's Civilization IV (PC) 94
Sid Meier's Civilization Revolution (360) 84

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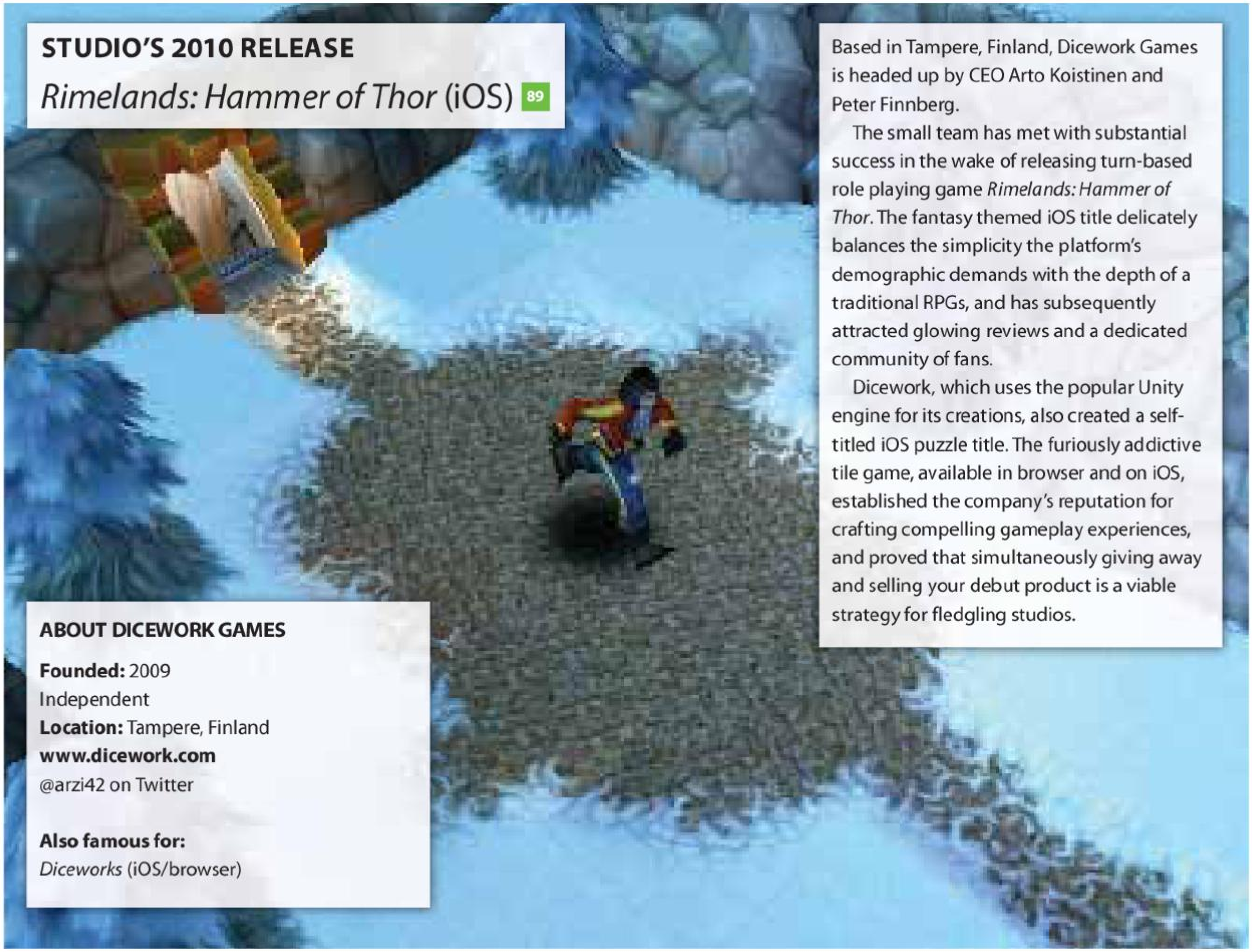
DICEWORK GAMES



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Rimelands: Hammer of Thor (iOS) 89

Based in Tampere, Finland, Dicework Games is headed up by CEO Arto Koistinen and Peter Finnberg.

The small team has met with substantial success in the wake of releasing turn-based role playing game *Rimelands: Hammer of Thor*. The fantasy themed iOS title delicately balances the simplicity the platform's demographic demands with the depth of a traditional RPGs, and has subsequently attracted glowing reviews and a dedicated community of fans.

Dicework, which uses the popular Unity engine for its creations, also created a self-titled iOS puzzle title. The furiously addictive tile game, available in browser and on iOS, established the company's reputation for crafting compelling gameplay experiences, and proved that simultaneously giving away and selling your debut product is a viable strategy for fledgling studios.

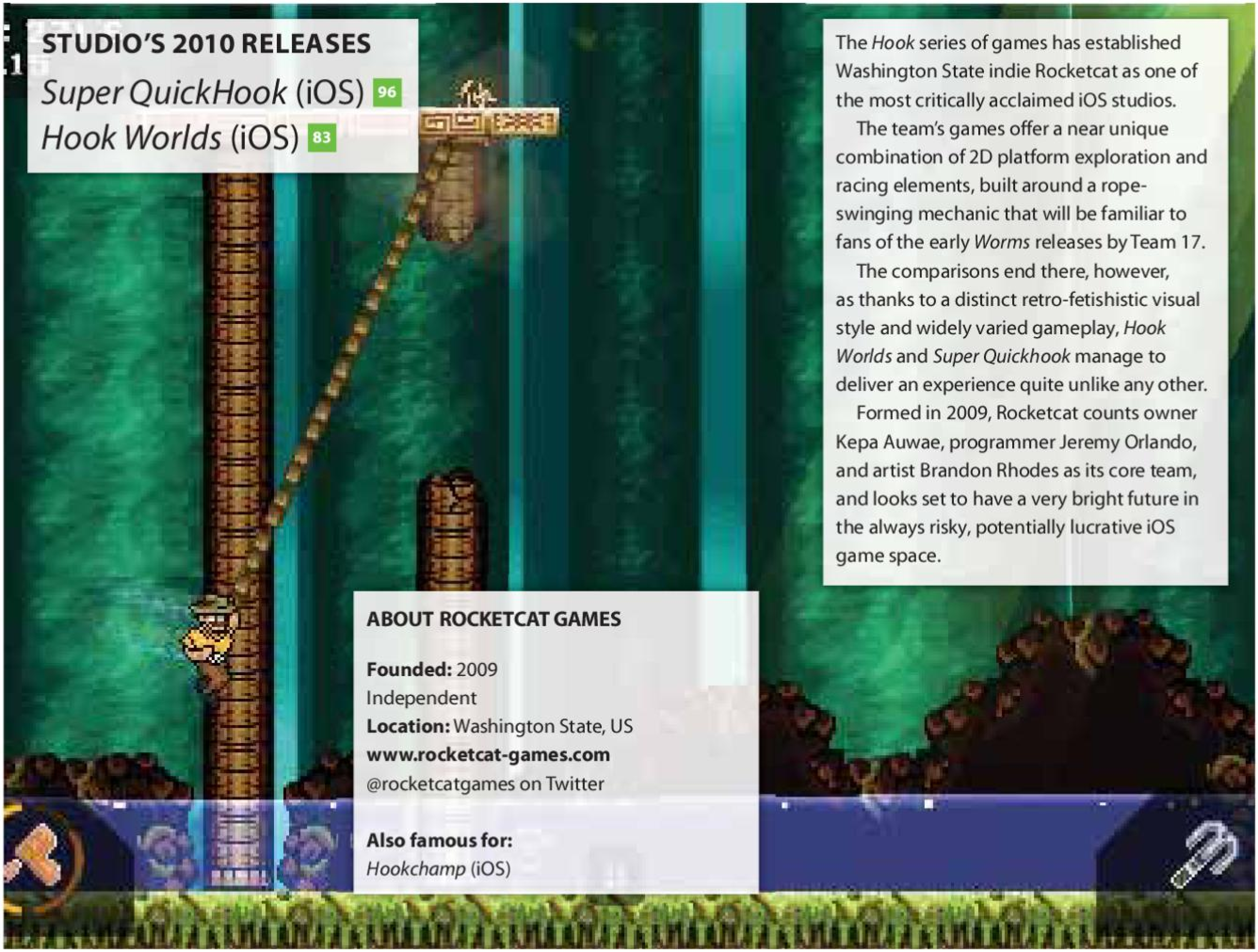
ABOUT DICEWORK GAMES

Founded: 2009
Independent
Location: Tampere, Finland
www.dicework.com
@arzi42 on Twitter

Also famous for:
Diceworks (iOS/browser)

ROCKETCAT GAMES

18



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASES

Super QuickHook (iOS) 96
Hook Worlds (iOS) 83

The *Hook* series of games has established Washington State indie Rocketcat as one of the most critically acclaimed iOS studios.

The team's games offer a near unique combination of 2D platform exploration and racing elements, built around a rope-swinging mechanic that will be familiar to fans of the early *Worms* releases by Team 17.

The comparisons end there, however, as thanks to a distinct retro-fetishistic visual style and widely varied gameplay, *Hook Worlds* and *Super Quickhook* manage to deliver an experience quite unlike any other.

Formed in 2009, Rocketcat counts owner Kepa Auwae, programmer Jeremy Orlando, and artist Brandon Rhodes as its core team, and looks set to have a very bright future in the always risky, potentially lucrative iOS game space.

ABOUT ROCKETCAT GAMES

Founded: 2009
Independent
Location: Washington State, US
www.rocketcat-games.com
@rocketcatgames on Twitter

Also famous for:
Hookchamp (iOS)

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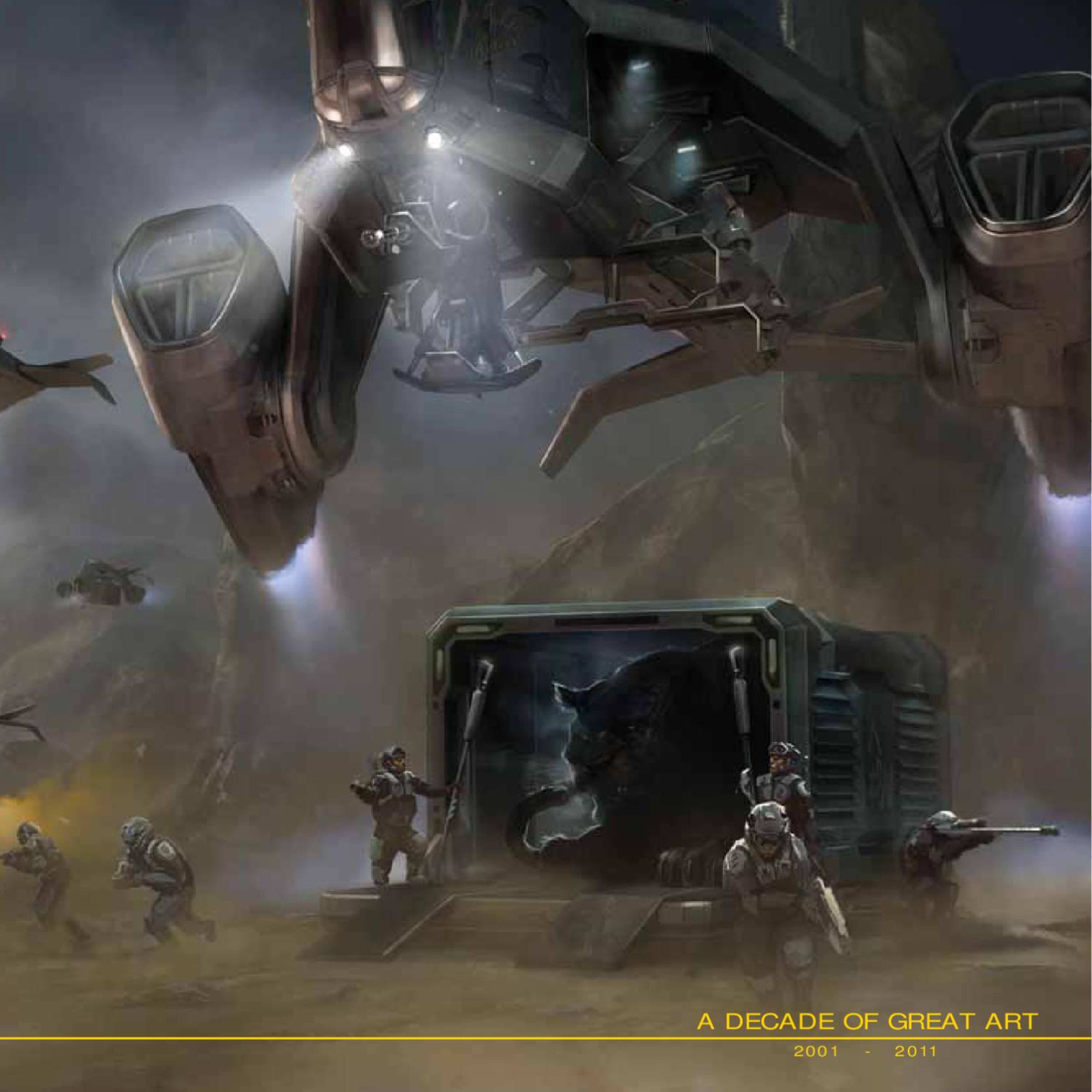

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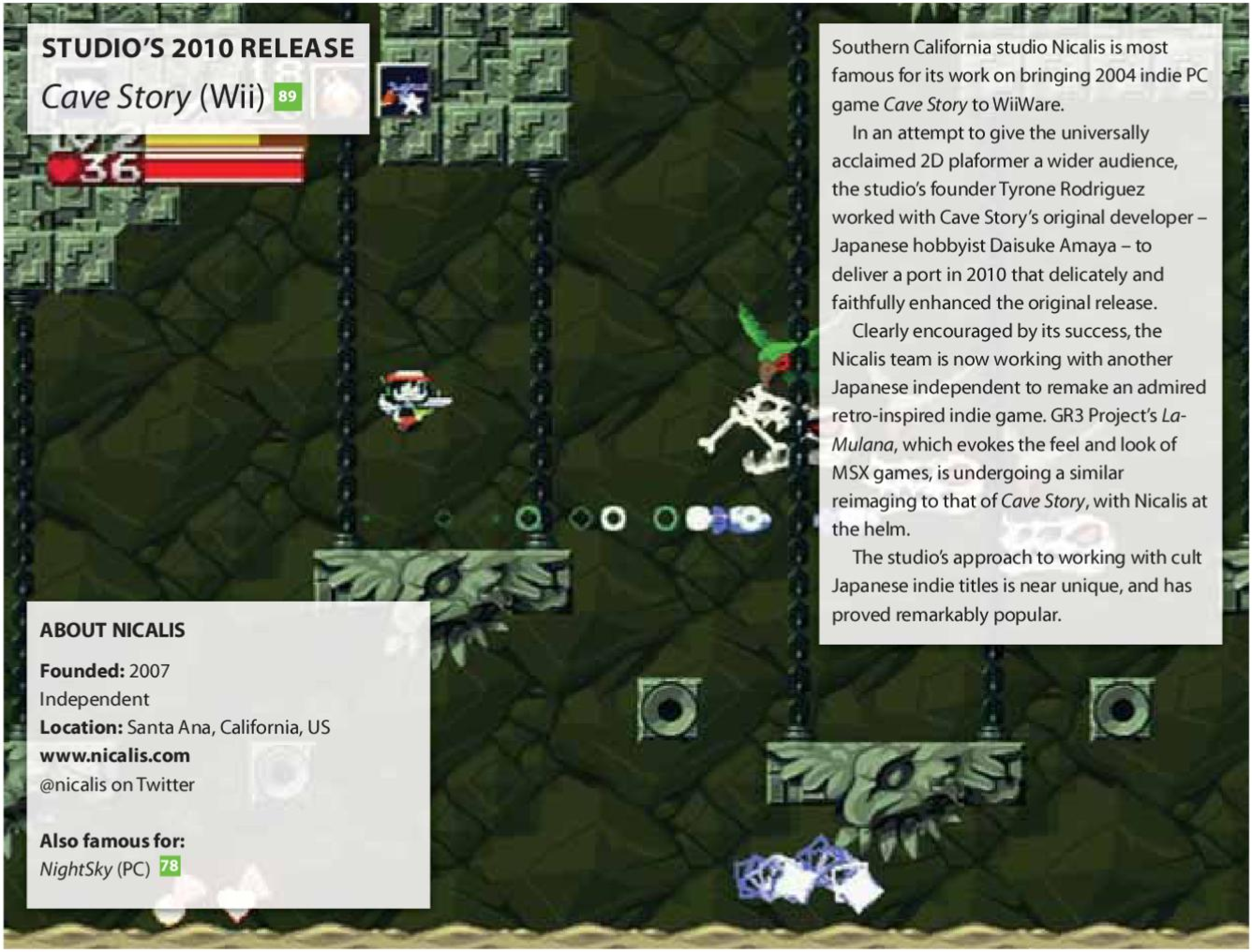
NICALIS



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Cave Story (Wii) 89

Southern California studio Nicalis is most famous for its work on bringing 2004 indie PC game *Cave Story* to WiiWare.

In an attempt to give the universally acclaimed 2D plaformer a wider audience, the studio's founder Tyrone Rodriguez worked with Cave Story's original developer – Japanese hobbyist Daisuke Amaya – to deliver a port in 2010 that delicately and faithfully enhanced the original release.

Clearly encouraged by its success, the Nicalis team is now working with another Japanese independent to remake an admired retro-inspired indie game. GR3 Project's *La-Mulana*, which evokes the feel and look of MSX games, is undergoing a similar reimaging to that of *Cave Story*, with Nicalis at the helm.

The studio's approach to working with cult Japanese indie titles is near unique, and has proved remarkably popular.

ABOUT NICALIS

Founded: 2007
Independent
Location: Santa Ana, California, US
www.nicalis.com
@nicalis on Twitter

Also famous for:
NightSky (PC) 78

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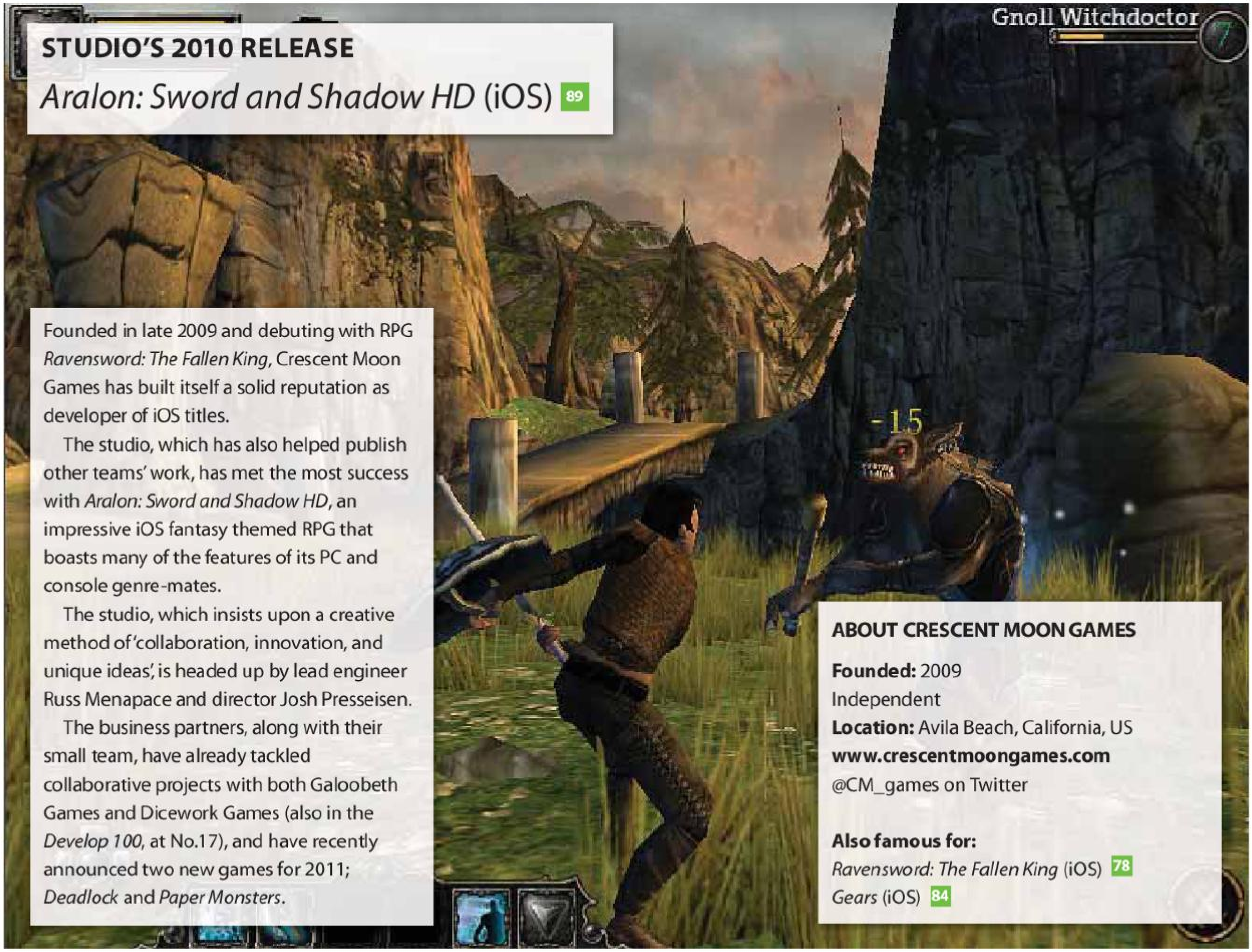
CRESCENT MOON GAMES



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Aralon: Sword and Shadow HD (iOS) 89

Founded in late 2009 and debuting with RPG *Ravensword: The Fallen King*, Crescent Moon Games has built itself a solid reputation as developer of iOS titles.

The studio, which has also helped publish other teams' work, has met the most success with *Aralon: Sword and Shadow HD*, an impressive iOS fantasy themed RPG that boasts many of the features of its PC and console genre-mates.

The studio, which insists upon a creative method of 'collaboration, innovation, and unique ideas', is headed up by lead engineer Russ Menapace and director Josh Presseisen.

The business partners, along with their small team, have already tackled collaborative projects with both Galoobeth Games and Dicework Games (also in the *Develop 100*, at No.17), and have recently announced two new games for 2011; *Deadlock* and *Paper Monsters*.

ABOUT CRESCENT MOON GAMES

Founded: 2009
Independent
Location: Avila Beach, California, US
www.crescentmoongames.com
@CM_games on Twitter

Also famous for:
Ravensword: The Fallen King (iOS) 78
Gears (iOS) 84

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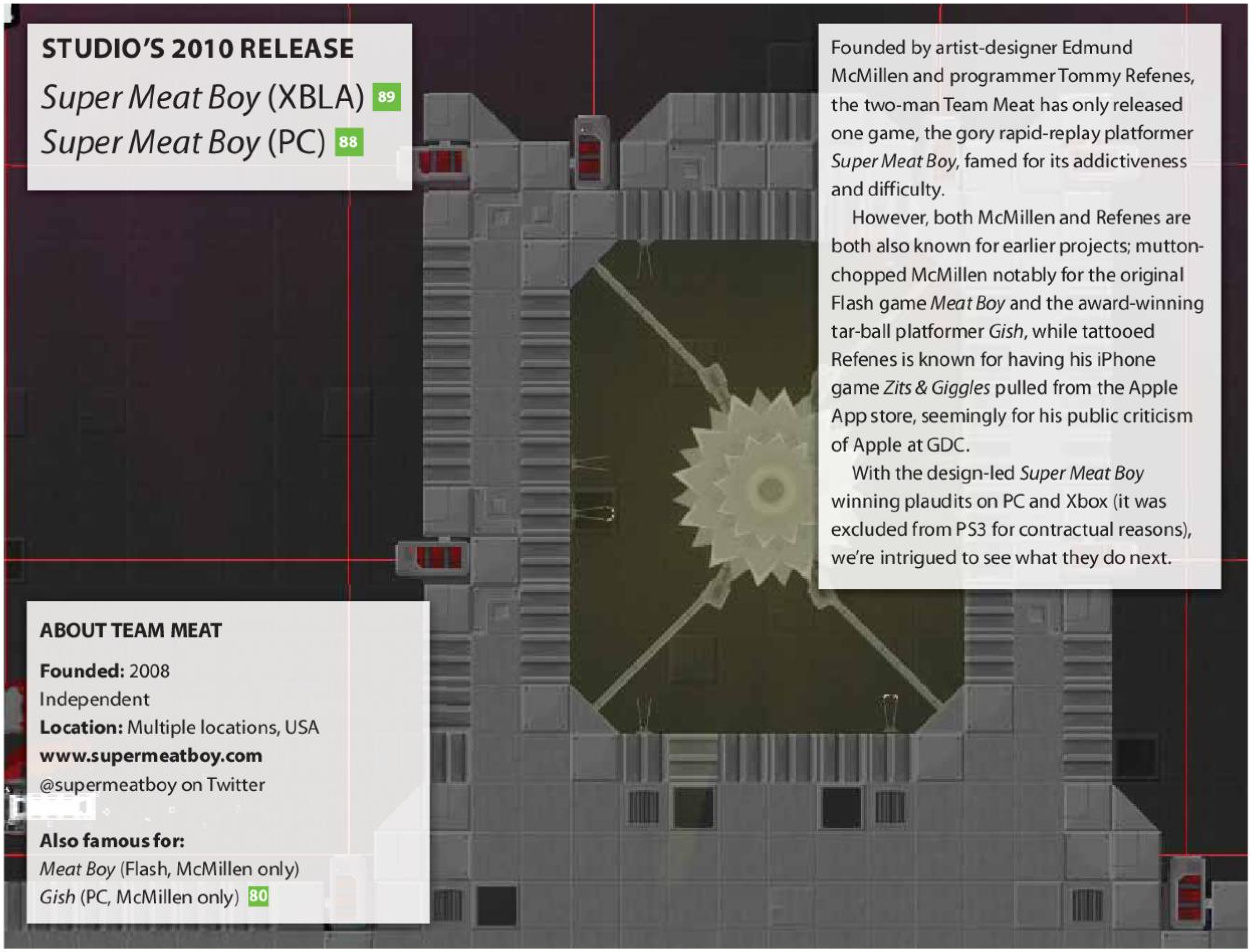
TEAM MEAT

21



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Super Meat Boy (XBLA) 89
Super Meat Boy (PC) 88

Founded by artist-designer Edmund McMillen and programmer Tommy Refenes, the two-man Team Meat has only released one game, the gory rapid-replay platformer *Super Meat Boy*, famed for its addictiveness and difficulty.

However, both McMillen and Refenes are both also known for earlier projects; mutton-chopped McMillen notably for the original Flash game *Meat Boy* and the award-winning tar-ball platformer *Gish*, while tattooed Refenes is known for having his iPhone game *Zits & Giggles* pulled from the Apple App store, seemingly for his public criticism of Apple at GDC.

With the design-led *Super Meat Boy* winning plaudits on PC and Xbox (it was excluded from PS3 for contractual reasons), we're intrigued to see what they do next.

ABOUT TEAM MEAT

Founded: 2008
Independent
Location: Multiple locations, USA
www.supermeatboy.com
@supermeatboy on Twitter

Also famous for:
Meat Boy (Flash, McMillen only)
Gish (PC, McMillen only) 80

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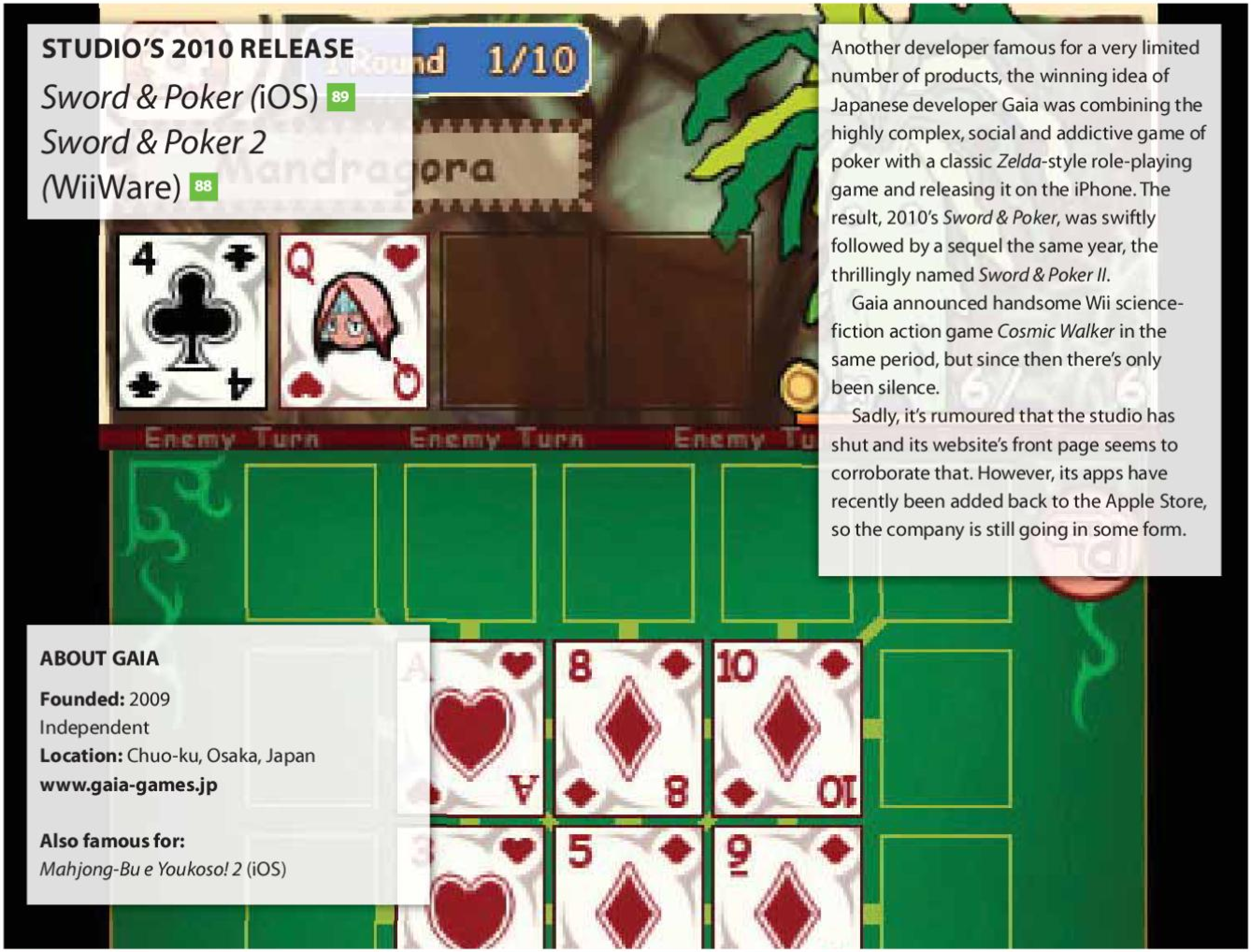
GAIA



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Sword & Poker (iOS) 89
Sword & Poker 2 (WiiWare) 88

Another developer famous for a very limited number of products, the winning idea of Japanese developer Gaia was combining the highly complex, social and addictive game of poker with a classic *Zelda*-style role-playing game and releasing it on the iPhone. The result, 2010's *Sword & Poker*, was swiftly followed by a sequel the same year, the thrillingly named *Sword & Poker II*.

Gaia announced handsome Wii science-fiction action game *Cosmic Walker* in the same period, but since then there's only been silence.

Sadly, it's rumoured that the studio has shut and its website's front page seems to corroborate that. However, its apps have recently been added back to the Apple Store, so the company is still going in some form.

ABOUT GAIA

Founded: 2009
Independent
Location: Chuo-ku, Osaka, Japan
www.gaia-games.jp

Also famous for:
Mahjong-Bu e Youkoso! 2 (iOS)

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enquiries@avatar-games.co.uk

GAMES RECRUITMENT
avatar

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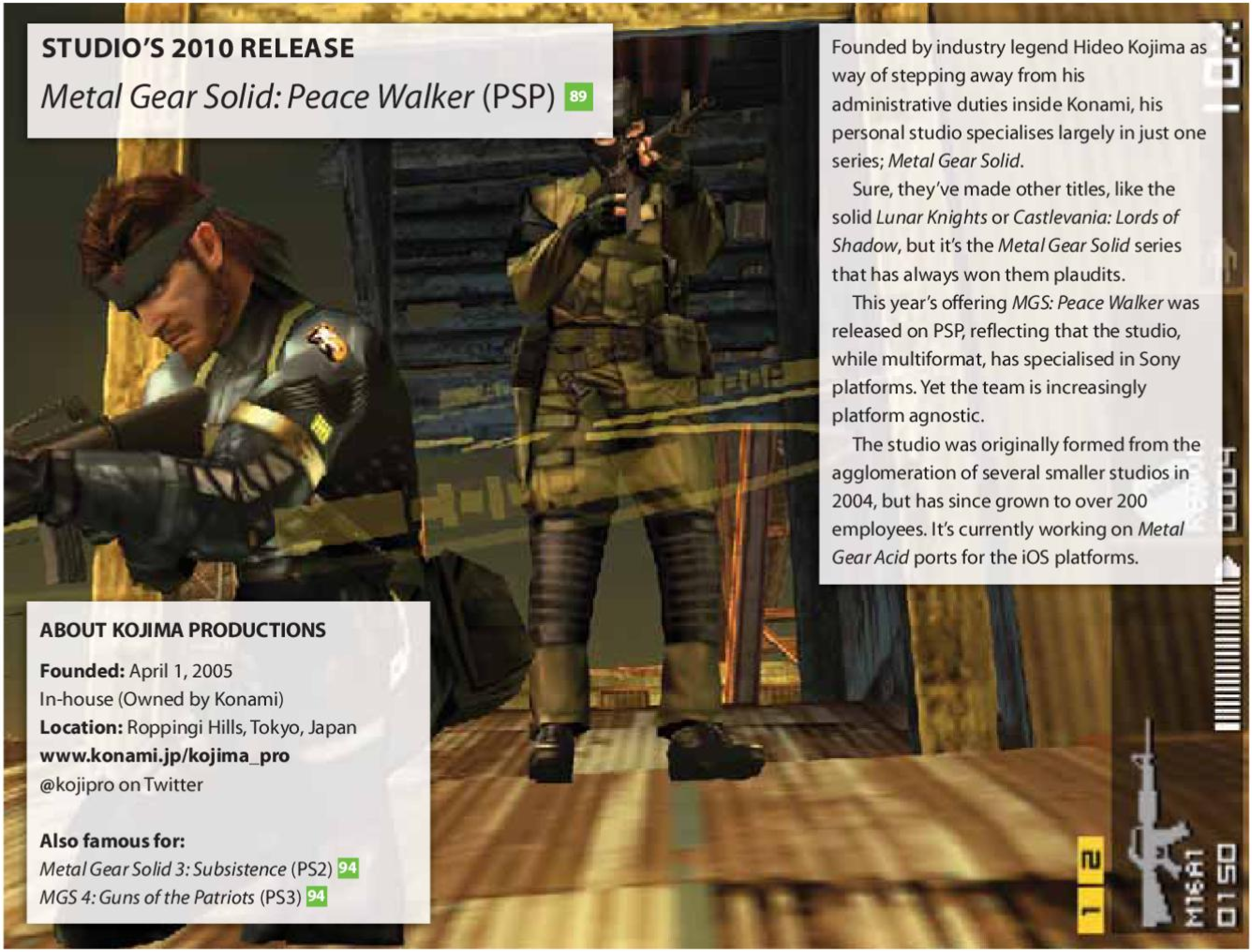
KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker (PSP) 89

Founded by industry legend Hideo Kojima as way of stepping away from his administrative duties inside Konami, his personal studio specialises largely in just one series; *Metal Gear Solid*.

Sure, they've made other titles, like the solid *Lunar Knights* or *Castlevania: Lords of Shadow*, but it's the *Metal Gear Solid* series that has always won them plaudits.

This year's offering *MGS: Peace Walker* was released on PSP, reflecting that the studio, while multiformat, has specialised in Sony platforms. Yet the team is increasingly platform agnostic.

The studio was originally formed from the agglomeration of several smaller studios in 2004, but has since grown to over 200 employees. It's currently working on *Metal Gear Acid* ports for the iOS platforms.

ABOUT KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS

Founded: April 1, 2005
In-house (Owned by Konami)
Location: Roppingi Hills, Tokyo, Japan
www.konami.jp/kojima_pro
@kojipro on Twitter

Also famous for:
Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence (PS2) 94
MGS 4: Guns of the Patriots (PS3) 94

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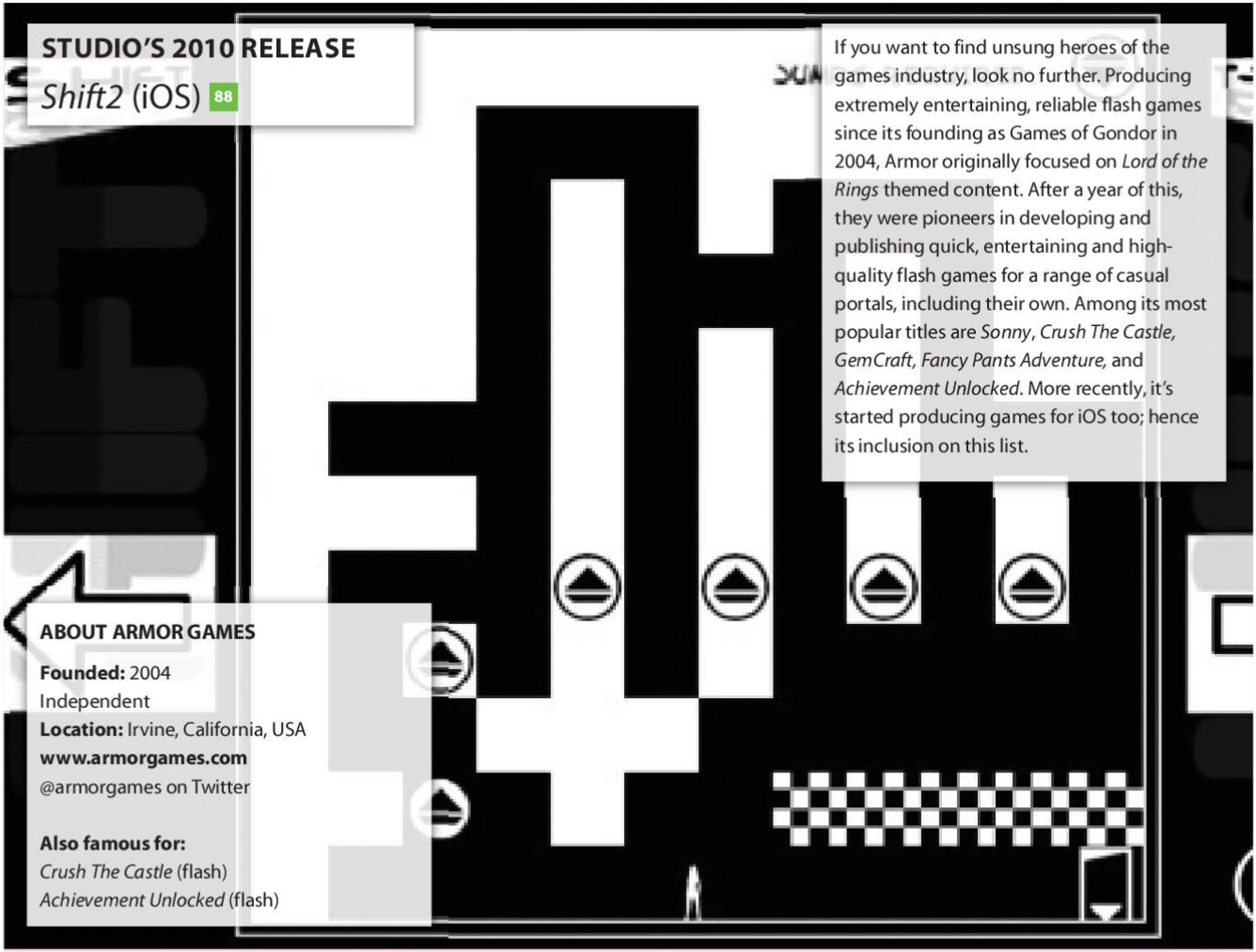
ARMOR GAMES

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Shift2 (iOS) 88

If you want to find unsung heroes of the games industry, look no further. Producing extremely entertaining, reliable flash games since its founding as Games of Gondor in 2004, Armor originally focused on *Lord of the Rings* themed content. After a year of this, they were pioneers in developing and publishing quick, entertaining and high-quality flash games for a range of casual portals, including their own. Among its most popular titles are *Sonny*, *Crush The Castle, GemCraft, Fancy Pants Adventure,* and *Achievement Unlocked*. More recently, it's started producing games for iOS too; hence its inclusion on this list.



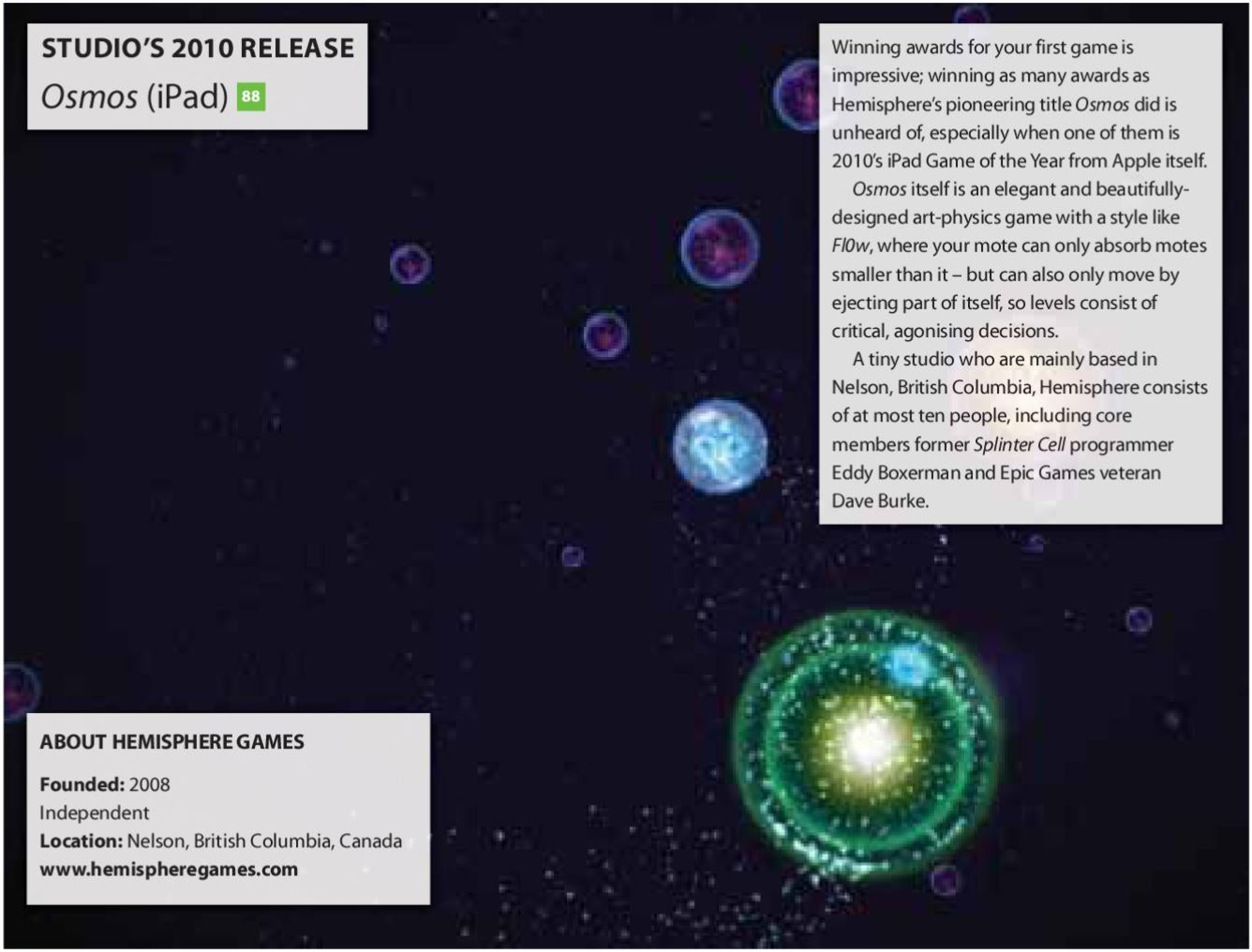
ABOUT ARMOR GAMES

Founded: 2004
Independent
Location: Irvine, California, USA
www.armorgames.com
@armorgames on Twitter

Also famous for:
Crush The Castle (flash)
Achievement Unlocked (flash)

25

HEMISPHERE GAMES



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Osmos (iPad) 88

Winning awards for your first game is impressive; winning as many awards as Hemisphere's pioneering title *Osmos* did is unheard of, especially when one of them is 2010's iPad Game of the Year from Apple itself.

Osmos itself is an elegant and beautifully-designed art-physics game with a style like *Fl0w*, where your mote can only absorb motes smaller than it – but can also only move by ejecting part of itself, so levels consist of critical, agonising decisions.

A tiny studio who are mainly based in Nelson, British Columbia, Hemisphere consists of at most ten people, including core members former *Splinter Cell* programmer Eddy Boxerman and Epic Games veteran Dave Burke.

ABOUT HEMISPHERE GAMES

Founded: 2008
Independent
Location: Nelson, British Columbia, Canada
www.hemispheregames.com

EA DICE

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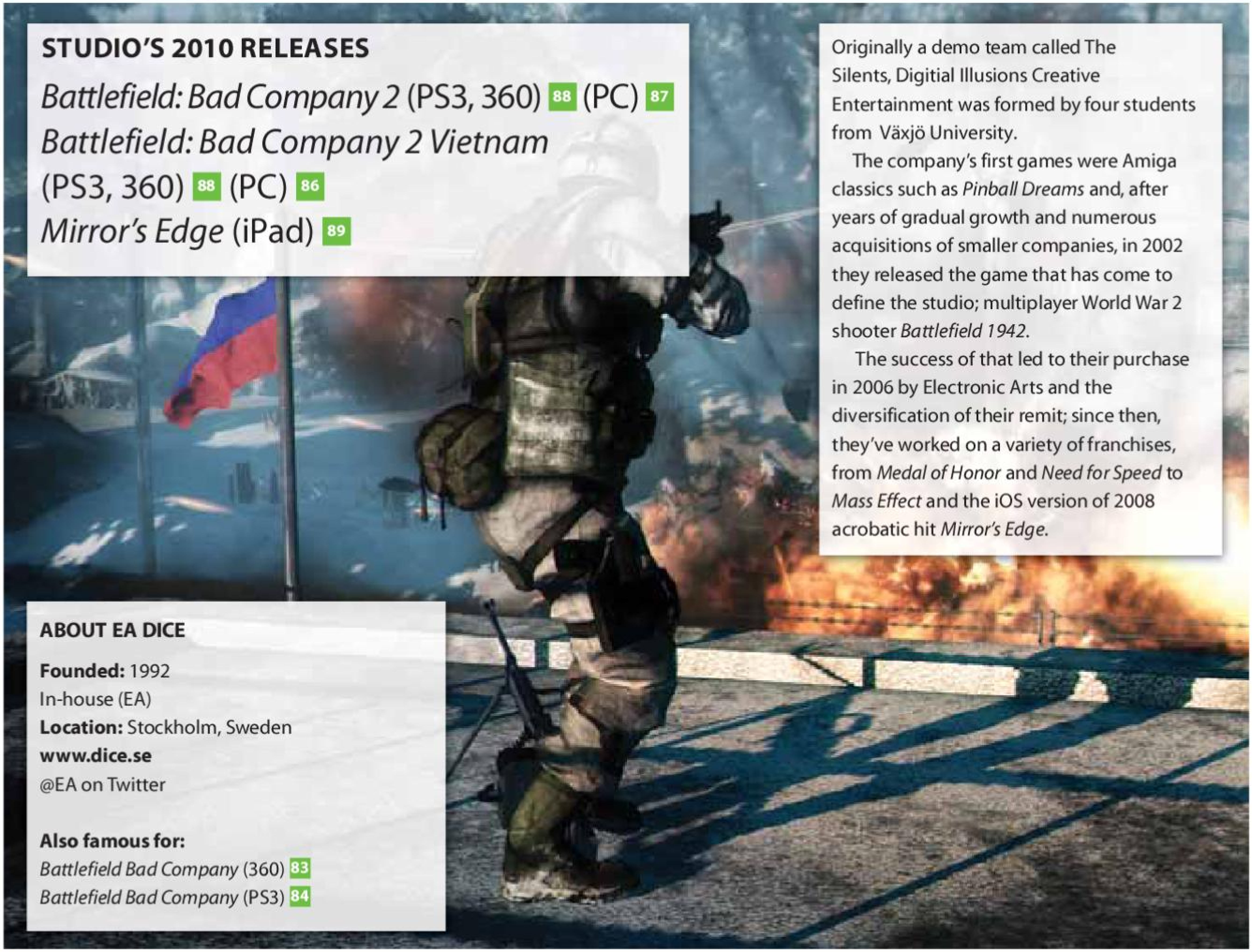

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASES

Battlefield: Bad Company 2 (PS3, 360) 88 (PC) 87
Battlefield: Bad Company 2 Vietnam (PS3, 360) 88 (PC) 86
Mirror's Edge (iPad) 89

Originally a demo team called The Silents, Digitial Illusions Creative Entertainment was formed by four students from Växjö University.

The company's first games were Amiga classics such as *Pinball Dreams* and, after years of gradual growth and numerous acquisitions of smaller companies, in 2002 they released the game that has come to define the studio; multiplayer World War 2 shooter *Battlefield 1942*.

The success of that led to their purchase in 2006 by Electronic Arts and the diversification of their remit; since then, they've worked on a variety of franchises, from *Medal of Honor* and *Need for Speed* to *Mass Effect* and the iOS version of 2008 acrobatic hit *Mirror's Edge*.

ABOUT EA DICE

Founded: 1992
In-house (EA)
Location: Stockholm, Sweden
www.dice.se
@EA on Twitter

Also famous for:
Battlefield Bad Company (360) 83
Battlefield Bad Company (PS3) 84

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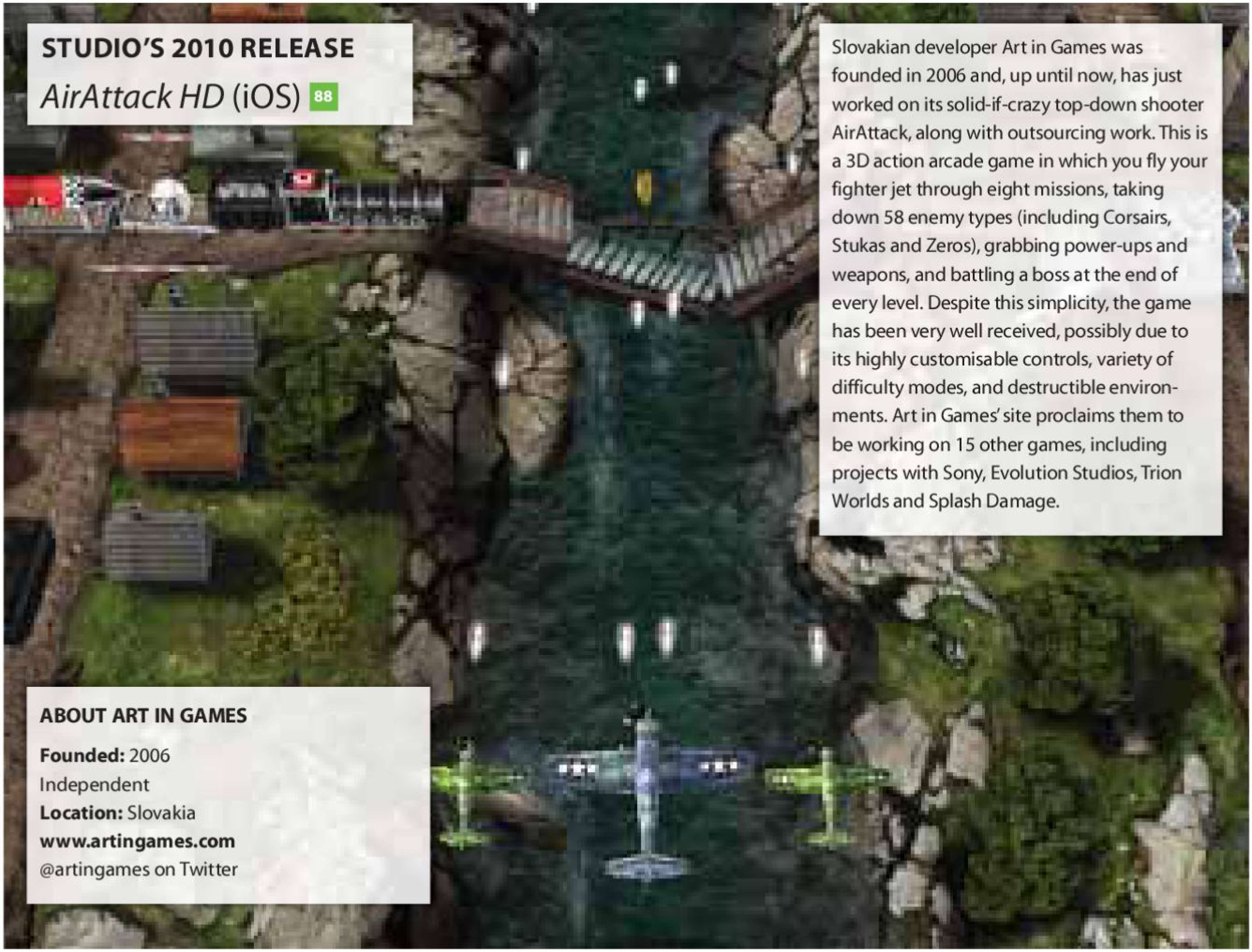
ART IN GAMES



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

AirAttack HD (iOS) 88

Slovakian developer Art in Games was founded in 2006 and, up until now, has just worked on its solid-if-crazy top-down shooter AirAttack, along with outsourcing work. This is a 3D action arcade game in which you fly your fighter jet through eight missions, taking down 58 enemy types (including Corsairs, Stukas and Zeros), grabbing power-ups and weapons, and battling a boss at the end of every level. Despite this simplicity, the game has been very well received, possibly due to its highly customisable controls, variety of difficulty modes, and destructible environments. Art in Games' site proclaims them to be working on 15 other games, including projects with Sony, Evolution Studios, Trion Worlds and Splash Damage.

ABOUT ART IN GAMES

Founded: 2006
Independent
Location: Slovakia
www.artingames.com
@artingames on Twitter

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ROCKSTAR NORTH

HEART
STOPPER
BURGER
Redwood

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

GTA IV: The Lost and the Damned (PS3) 88
GTA IV: The Ballard of Gay Tony (PS3) 87

Originally founded as DMA Design in Dundee in 1988 and responsible for instant classics *Lemmings* and *Grand Theft Auto*, Rockstar North is one of the UK's longest running studios.

The studio bumbled along until 1997 when it was swallowed up, first by Gremlin Interactive, then by Infogrames, then finally sold to Take-Two in 1999.

It was 2001's *GTA III* that propelled the team back into the limelight, triggering the series and open-world format which supported Take-Two throughout the noughties. Given the adulation its games attract from the hardcore, it's a surprise to see the *GTA* creators this far down the list, but Rockstar North hasn't released a full game since 2008's *GTA IV*; we fully expect announcements from them soon to rectify this situation.

ABOUT ROCKSTAR NORTH

Founded: 1988
In-house (Owned by Rockstar Games/Take-Two)
Location: Edinburgh, Scotland, UK
www.rockstarnorth.com
@RockstarGames on Twitter

Also famous for:
Grand Theft Auto IV (PS3) 98
Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas (PS2) 95

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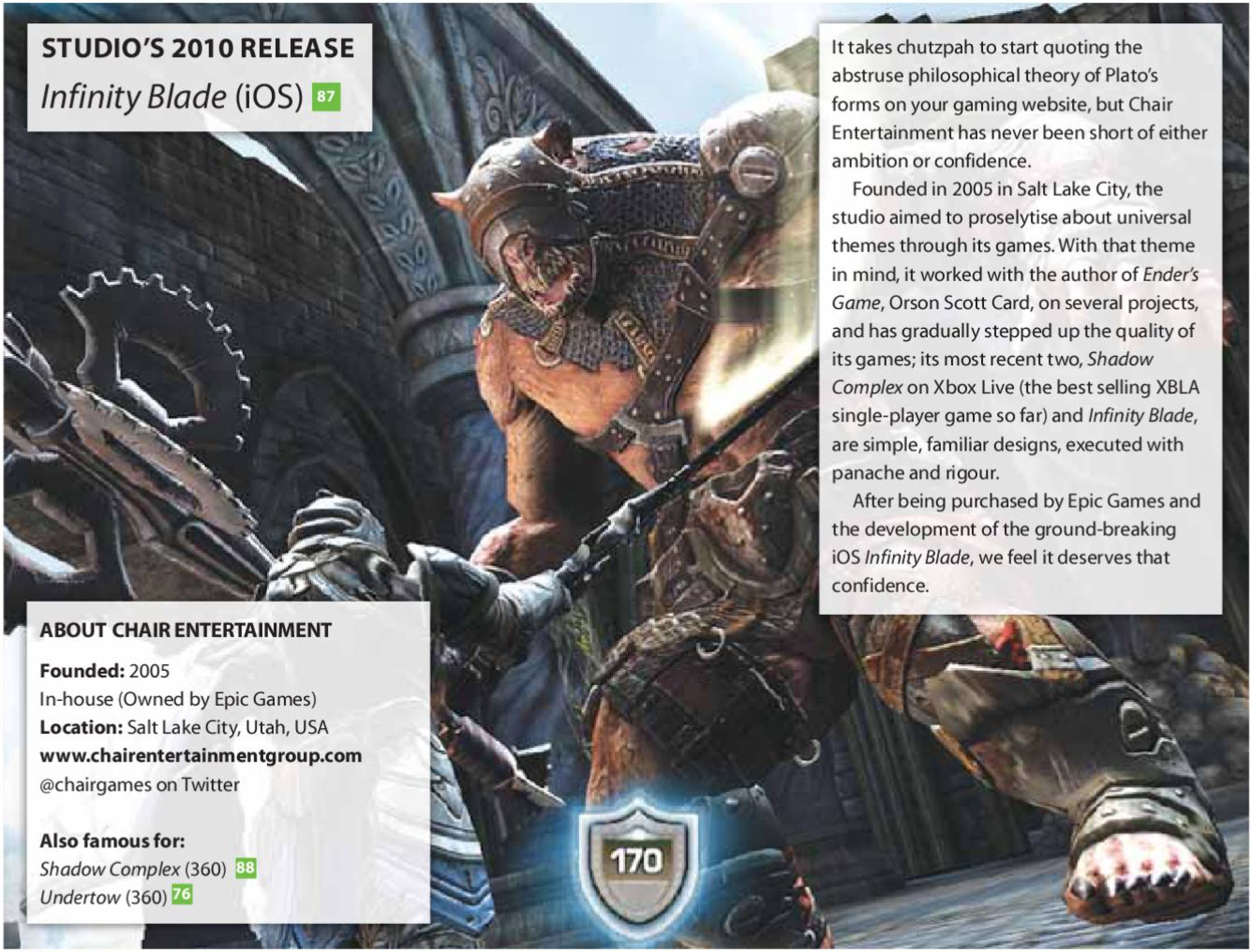
CHAIR ENTERTAINMENT



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Infinity Blade (iOS) 87

It takes chutzpah to start quoting the abstruse philosophical theory of Plato's forms on your gaming website, but Chair Entertainment has never been short of either ambition or confidence.

Founded in 2005 in Salt Lake City, the studio aimed to proselytise about universal themes through its games. With that theme in mind, it worked with the author of *Ender's Game*, Orson Scott Card, on several projects, and has gradually stepped up the quality of its games; its most recent two, *Shadow Complex* on Xbox Live (the best selling XBLA single-player game so far) and *Infinity Blade*, are simple, familiar designs, executed with panache and rigour.

After being purchased by Epic Games and the development of the ground-breaking iOS *Infinity Blade*, we feel it deserves that confidence.

ABOUT CHAIR ENTERTAINMENT

Founded: 2005
In-house (Owned by Epic Games)
Location: Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
www.chairentertainmentgroup.com
@chairgames on Twitter

Also famous for:
Shadow Complex (360) 88
Undertow (360) 76

RETRO STUDIOS

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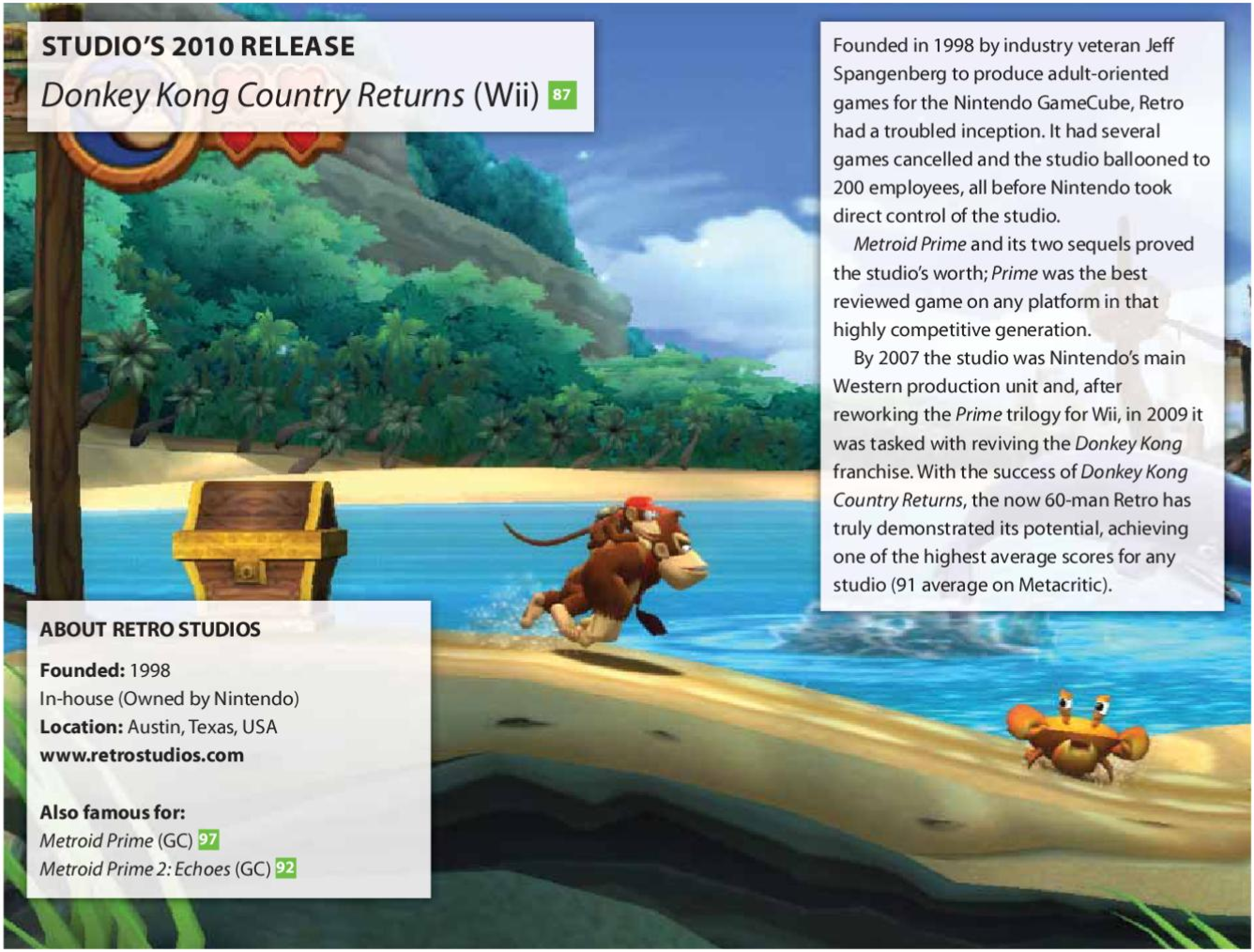

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Donkey Kong Country Returns (Wii) 87

Founded in 1998 by industry veteran Jeff Spangenberg to produce adult-oriented games for the Nintendo GameCube, Retro had a troubled inception. It had several games cancelled and the studio ballooned to 200 employees, all before Nintendo took direct control of the studio.

Metroid Prime and its two sequels proved the studio's worth; *Prime* was the best reviewed game on any platform in that highly competitive generation.

By 2007 the studio was Nintendo's main Western production unit and, after reworking the *Prime* trilogy for Wii, in 2009 it was tasked with reviving the *Donkey Kong* franchise. With the success of *Donkey Kong Country Returns*, the now 60-man Retro has truly demonstrated its potential, achieving one of the highest average scores for any studio (91 average on Metacritic).

ABOUT RETRO STUDIOS

Founded: 1998
In-house (Owned by Nintendo)
Location: Austin, Texas, USA
www.retrostudios.com

Also famous for:
Metroid Prime (GC) 97
Metroid Prime 2: Echoes (GC) 92

31

GAME FREAK

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Pokémon HeartGold (DS) 87
Pokémon SoulSilver (DS) 87

Having created over 12 *Pokémon* games in 15 years, Game Freak continues to defy those who figured they'd have run out of wacky monster ideas by now.

2010 releases *HeartGold* and *SoulSilver* are remasters of 10-year-old editions *Gold* and *Silver*. Game director Shigeki Morimoto took care to balance fond memories with originality. Both critics and fans warmed to the games, which have surpassed ten million sales worldwide.

Pokémon remains one of Nintendo's biggest assets in the battle for handheld supremacy, and Game Freak's 66 employees are at its heart. Expect their 2011 *Pokémon* releases to crop up here next year, as well as news on 3DS *Pokémon* titles in the near future.

Oshawott
Lv.5
HP
Snivy
Lv.5
HP
20/20
What will Snivy do?

ABOUT GAME FREAK

Founded: 1989
Independent
Location: Setagaya, Tokyo, Japan
www.gamefreak.co.jp

Also famous for:
Pokémon Diamond (DS) 85
Pokémon Pearl (DS) 85

FREESTYLEGAMES

32

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASES

DJ Hero 2 (Wii) 88
DJ Hero 2 (360, PS3) 86

Arriving at the tail end of the rhythm game boom, few people expected *DJ Hero* and its plastic turntables to disturb the charts, let alone win critical acclaim.

Nevertheless, this fresh, well crafted take on the rhythm genre reignited interest. And last year FreeStyle upped the ante yet again with *DJ Hero 2*, offering a broader soundtrack and new layers of gameplay depth. The Wii version is in fact Activision's highest Metascore of 2010.

Activision purchased FreeStyle in 2008. The studio narrowly avoided worldwide layoffs by their parent company earlier this year. Along with Harmonix, FreeStyle has the adventurous spirit to continue evolving the rhythm genre at this crucial time.

ABOUT FREESTYLEGAMES

Founded: 2002
In-house (owned by Activision)
Location: Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, UK
www.freestylegames.com
@FSGStudio on Twitter

Also famous for:
DJ Hero (PS3) 86
DJ Hero (360) 84

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VENAN ENTERTAINMENT

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASES

Space Miner: Space Ore Bust (iOS) 91
Ninjatown: Trees of Doom! (iOS) 82

Some of the companies in *Develop 100* this year are entirely new to the mobile market – Venan has been at it for years.

Founded by long time friends Philip Taksen and Brandon Curiel, the studio has had a long relationship with EA. It made a name for itself with the BAFTA-nominated DS title *Ninjatown* and, more recently, its self-published iPhone games.

The goal with *Ninjatown* was to inject 'sophistication and strategy' into chaotic survival. *Space Miner* was awarded game of the year by *Touch Arcade* and *EGM*.

Venan released an HD version for iPad and freemium edition in late 2010. They are currently hard at work on a full sequel to *Space Miner* that we should learn more about very soon.

ABOUT VENAN ENTERTAINMENT

Founded: 2002
Independent
Location: Cromwell, Connecticut, USA
www.venan.com
@VenanEnt on Twitter

Also famous for:
Ninjatown (DS) 80

TREASURE

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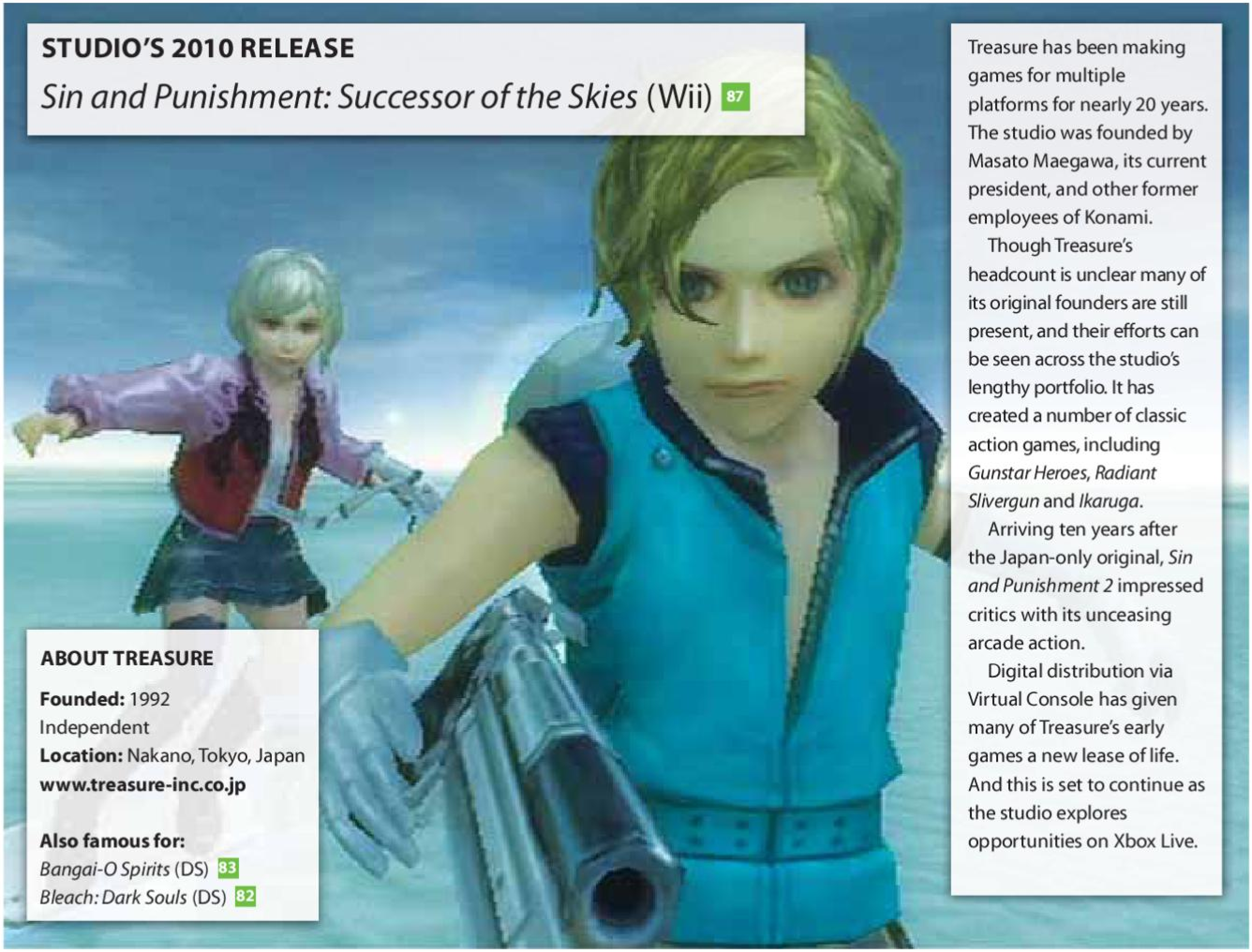
STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Sin and Punishment: Successor of the Skies (Wii) 87



Treasure has been making games for multiple platforms for nearly 20 years. The studio was founded by Masato Maegawa, its current president, and other former employees of Konami.

Though Treasure's headcount is unclear many of its original founders are still present, and their efforts can be seen across the studio's lengthy portfolio. It has created a number of classic action games, including *Gunstar Heroes*, *Radiant Slivergun* and *Ikaruga*.

Arriving ten years after the Japan-only original, *Sin and Punishment 2* impressed critics with its unceasing arcade action.

Digital distribution via Virtual Console has given many of Treasure's early games a new lease of life. And this is set to continue as the studio explores opportunities on Xbox Live.

ABOUT TREASURE

Founded: 1992
Independent
Location: Nakano, Tokyo, Japan
www.treasure-inc.co.jp

Also famous for:
Bangai-O Spirits (DS) 83
Bleach: Dark Souls (DS) 82

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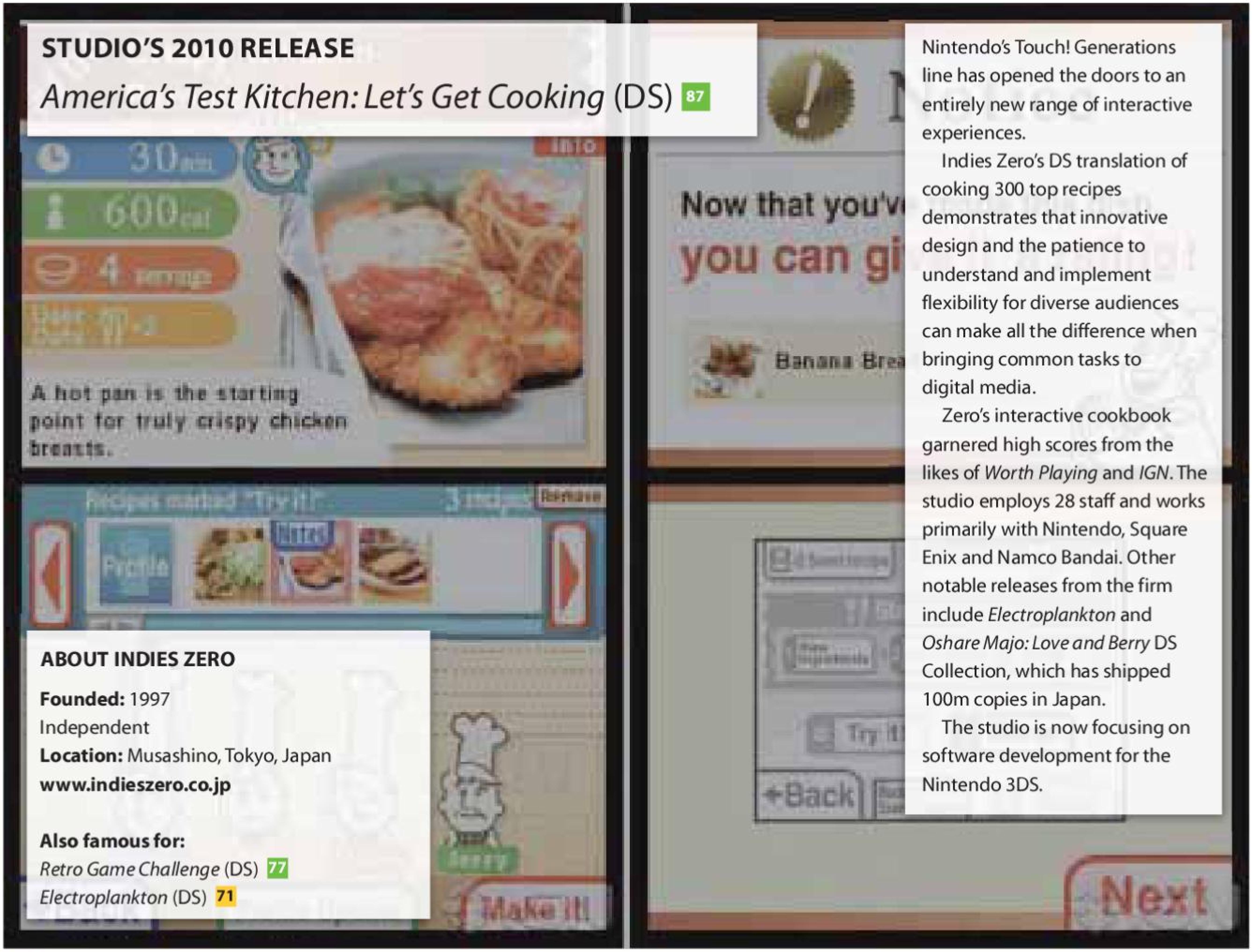
INDIES ZERO



A hot pan is the starting point for truly crispy chicken breasts.

Now that you'v
you can gi

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

America's Test Kitchen: Let's Get Cooking (DS) 87

ABOUT INDIES ZERO

Founded: 1997
Independent
Location: Musashino, Tokyo, Japan
www.indieszero.co.jp

Also famous for:
Retro Game Challenge (DS) 77
Electroplankton (DS) 71

Nintendo's Touch! Generations line has opened the doors to an entirely new range of interactive experiences.

Indies Zero's DS translation of cooking 300 top recipes demonstrates that innovative design and the patience to understand and implement flexibility for diverse audiences can make all the difference when bringing common tasks to digital media.

Zero's interactive cookbook garnered high scores from the likes of *Worth Playing* and *IGN*. The studio employs 28 staff and works primarily with Nintendo, Square Enix and Namco Bandai. Other notable releases from the firm include *Electroplankton* and *Oshare Majo: Love and Berry* DS Collection, which has shipped 100m copies in Japan.

The studio is now focusing on software development for the Nintendo 3DS.

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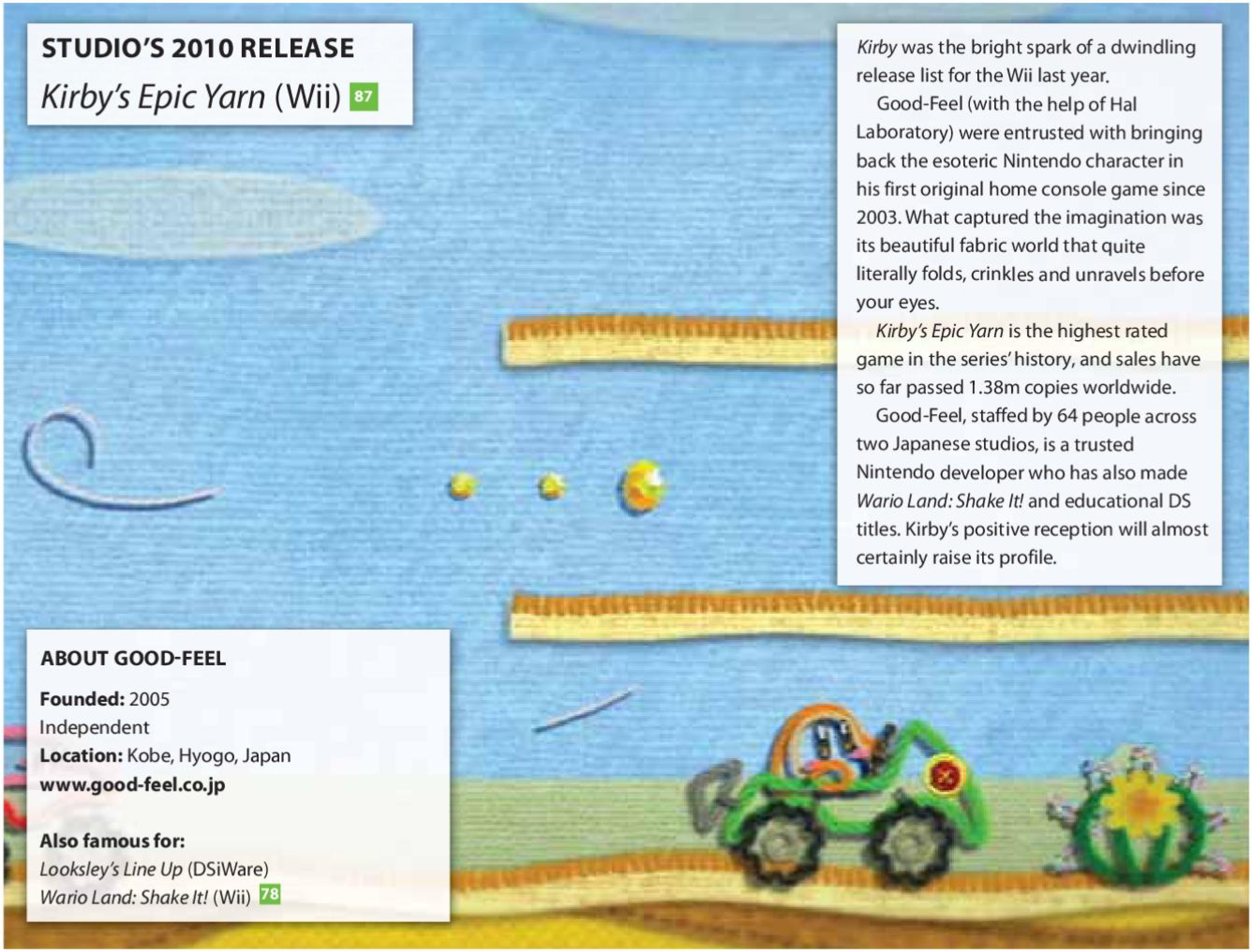
GOOD-FEEL



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Kirby's Epic Yarn (Wii) 87

Kirby was the bright spark of a dwindling release list for the Wii last year.

Good-Feel (with the help of Hal Laboratory) were entrusted with bringing back the esoteric Nintendo character in his first original home console game since 2003. What captured the imagination was its beautiful fabric world that quite literally folds, crinkles and unravels before your eyes.

Kirby's Epic Yarn is the highest rated game in the series' history, and sales have so far passed 1.38m copies worldwide.

Good-Feel, staffed by 64 people across two Japanese studios, is a trusted Nintendo developer who has also made *Wario Land: Shake It!* and educational DS titles. Kirby's positive reception will almost certainly raise its profile.

ABOUT GOOD-FEEL

Founded: 2005
Independent
Location: Kobe, Hyogo, Japan
www.good-feel.co.jp

Also famous for:
Looksley's Line Up (DSiWare)
Wario Land: Shake It! (Wii) 78

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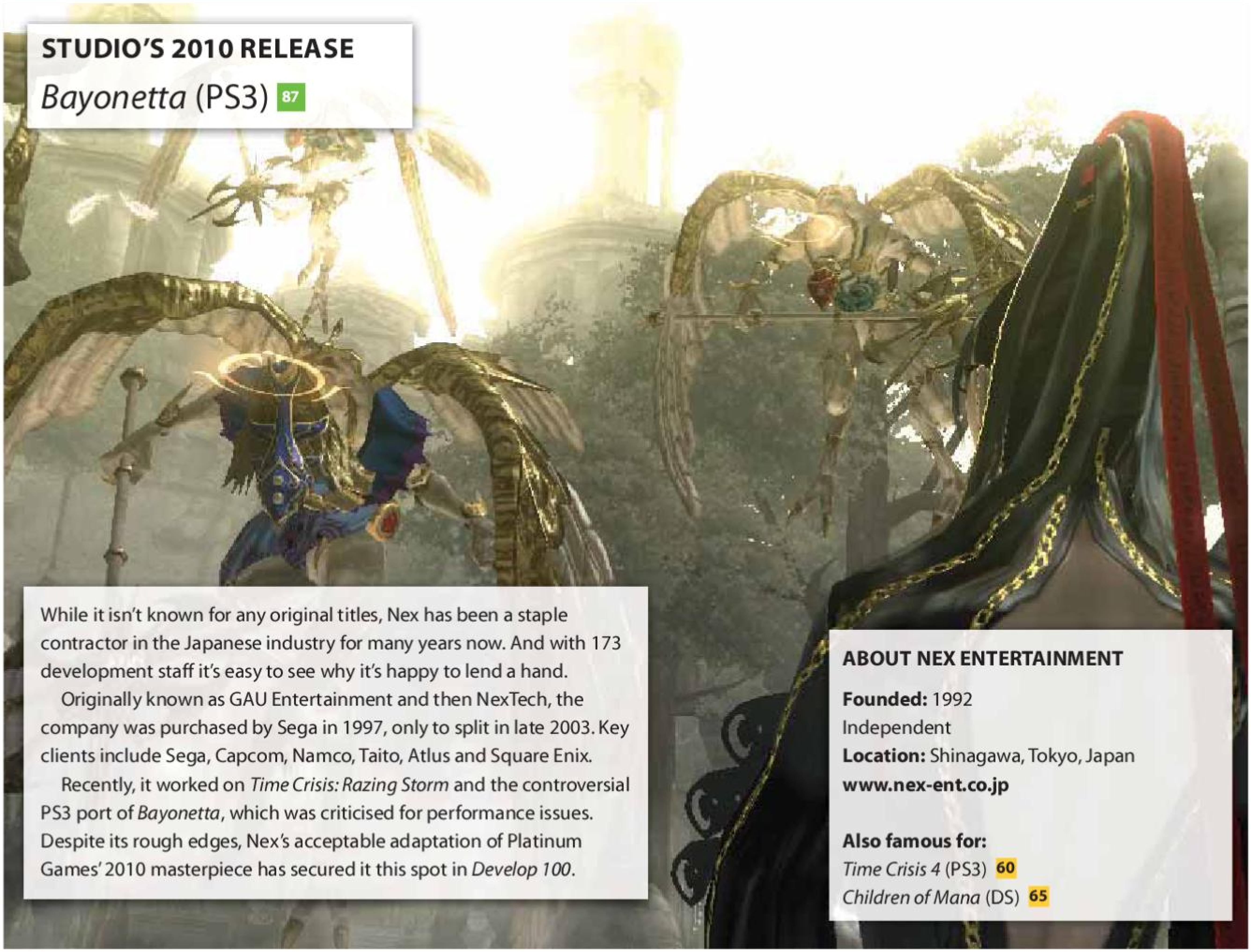
NEX ENTERTAINMENT



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Bayonetta (PS3) 87

While it isn't known for any original titles, Nex has been a staple contractor in the Japanese industry for many years now. And with 173 development staff it's easy to see why it's happy to lend a hand.

Originally known as GAU Entertainment and then NexTech, the company was purchased by Sega in 1997, only to split in late 2003. Key clients include Sega, Capcom, Namco, Taito, Atlus and Square Enix.

Recently, it worked on *Time Crisis: Razing Storm* and the controversial PS3 port of *Bayonetta*, which was criticised for performance issues. Despite its rough edges, Nex's acceptable adaptation of Platinum Games' 2010 masterpiece has secured it this spot in *Develop 100*.

ABOUT NEX ENTERTAINMENT

Founded: 1992
Independent
Location: Shinagawa, Tokyo, Japan
www.nex-ent.co.jp

Also famous for:
Time Crisis 4 (PS3) 60
Children of Mana (DS) 65

KAIROSOFT

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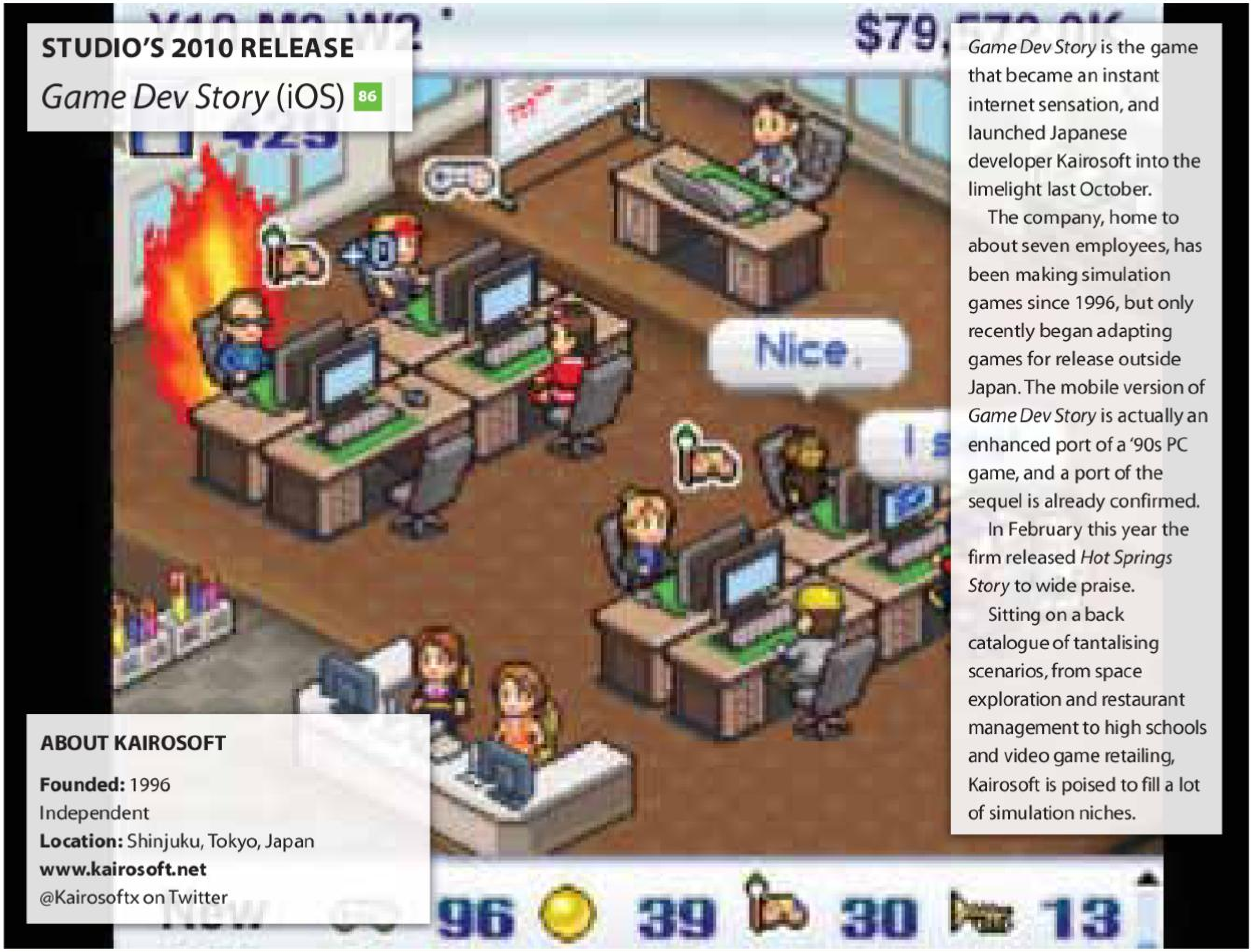

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Game Dev Story (iOS) 86

Game Dev Story is the game that became an instant internet sensation, and launched Japanese developer Kairosoft into the limelight last October.

The company, home to about seven employees, has been making simulation games since 1996, but only recently began adapting games for release outside Japan. The mobile version of *Game Dev Story* is actually an enhanced port of a '90s PC game, and a port of the sequel is already confirmed.

In February this year the firm released *Hot Springs Story* to wide praise.

Sitting on a back catalogue of tantalising scenarios, from space exploration and restaurant management to high schools and video game retailing, Kairosoft is poised to fill a lot of simulation niches.

ABOUT KAIROSOFT

Founded: 1996
Independent
Location: Shinjuku, Tokyo, Japan
www.kairosoft.net
@Kairosoftx on Twitter

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GRUMPYFACE STUDIOS

1,035
WispinGame.com

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Wispin (iOS) 86

Grumpyface's debut release, *Wispin*, is a colour matching arcade game for iPhone. Favourable reviews from critics, like *GameZebo*, *Touch Arcade* and *Pocket Gamer*, and positive word-of-mouth helped bubble the game up to the top 10 paid-for games on US iTunes download charts.

Wispin is another game that was born from an entirely digital collaboration process. Studio head and ideas man Chris Graham, a 3D artist who previously worked in architectural visualisation and the casino industry, and programmer Edgar Bocanegra cooperated from different US States on the project.

Grumpyface released a host of free updates for their debut hit, and launched an enhanced iPad version in March. Graham says they have big plans for this year, too.

ABOUT GRUMPYFACE STUDIOS

Founded: 2010
Independent
Location: Portland, Oregon, US
www.grumpyfacestudios.com
@Grumpyface on Twitter

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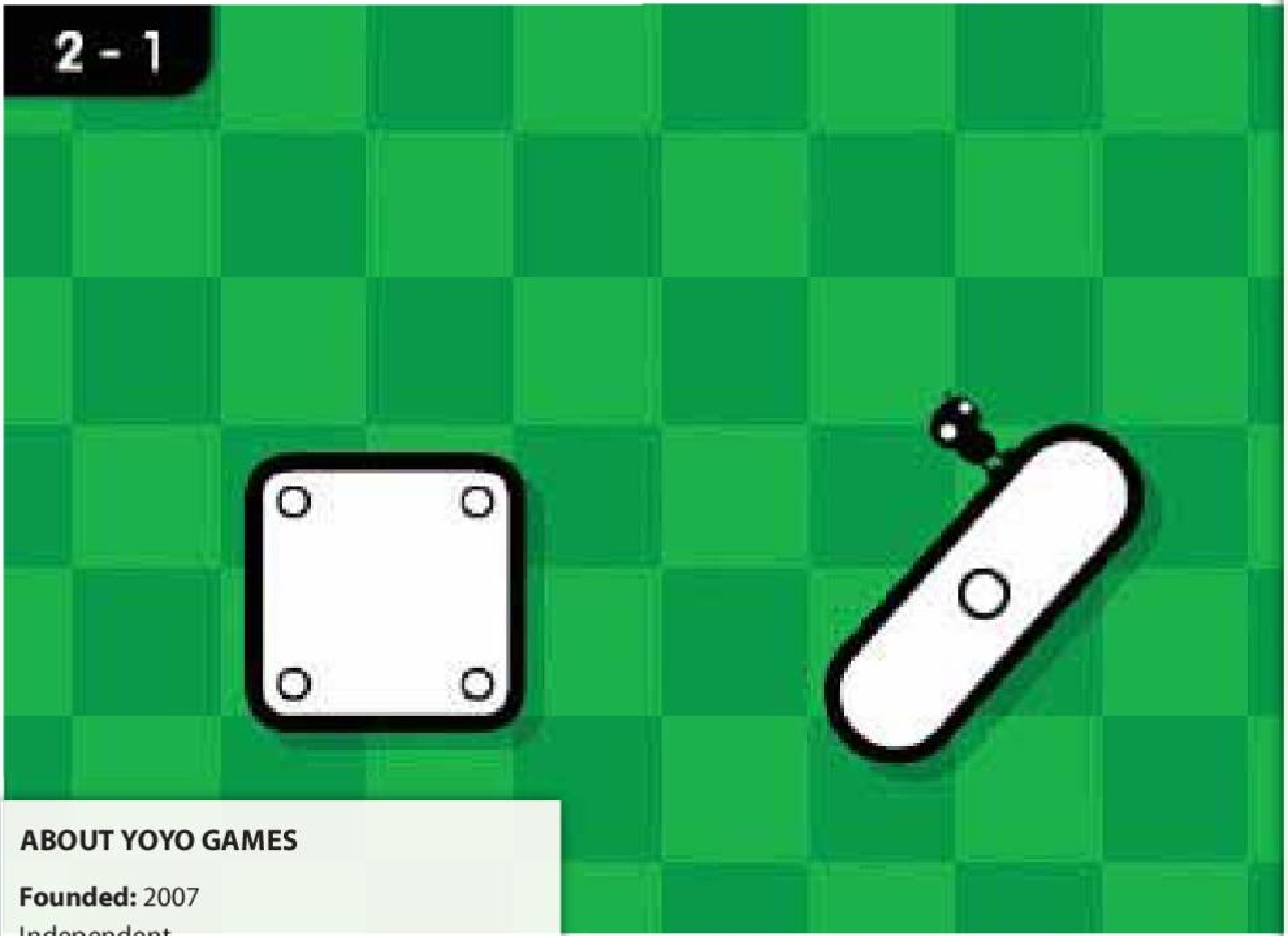
YOYO GAMES

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

They Need to be Fed (iOS) 86



ABOUT YOYO GAMES

Founded: 2007
Independent
Location: Dundee, Scotland, UK
www.yoyogames.com
@YoYoGamemaker on Twitter

YoYo Games isn't just a development studio; it's a partnership created for the purpose of getting the most out of the Game Maker development suite and sustaining a community for its users.

The company is headed by Sandy Duncan, former vice president of Xbox Europe, and supported by computer science tutor and Game Maker creator Mark Overmars.

They Need to be Fed won the fifth YoYo Games competition and was created by Jesse Venbrux, a long time user of the suite.

Games created using Game Maker are hosted free on YoYo Games' portal.

The next version of Game Maker is 9.0, which will likely support HTML5.

So far users have only been able to release games on iOS, but they will soon be able to port their games to Mac, PSP and Android.

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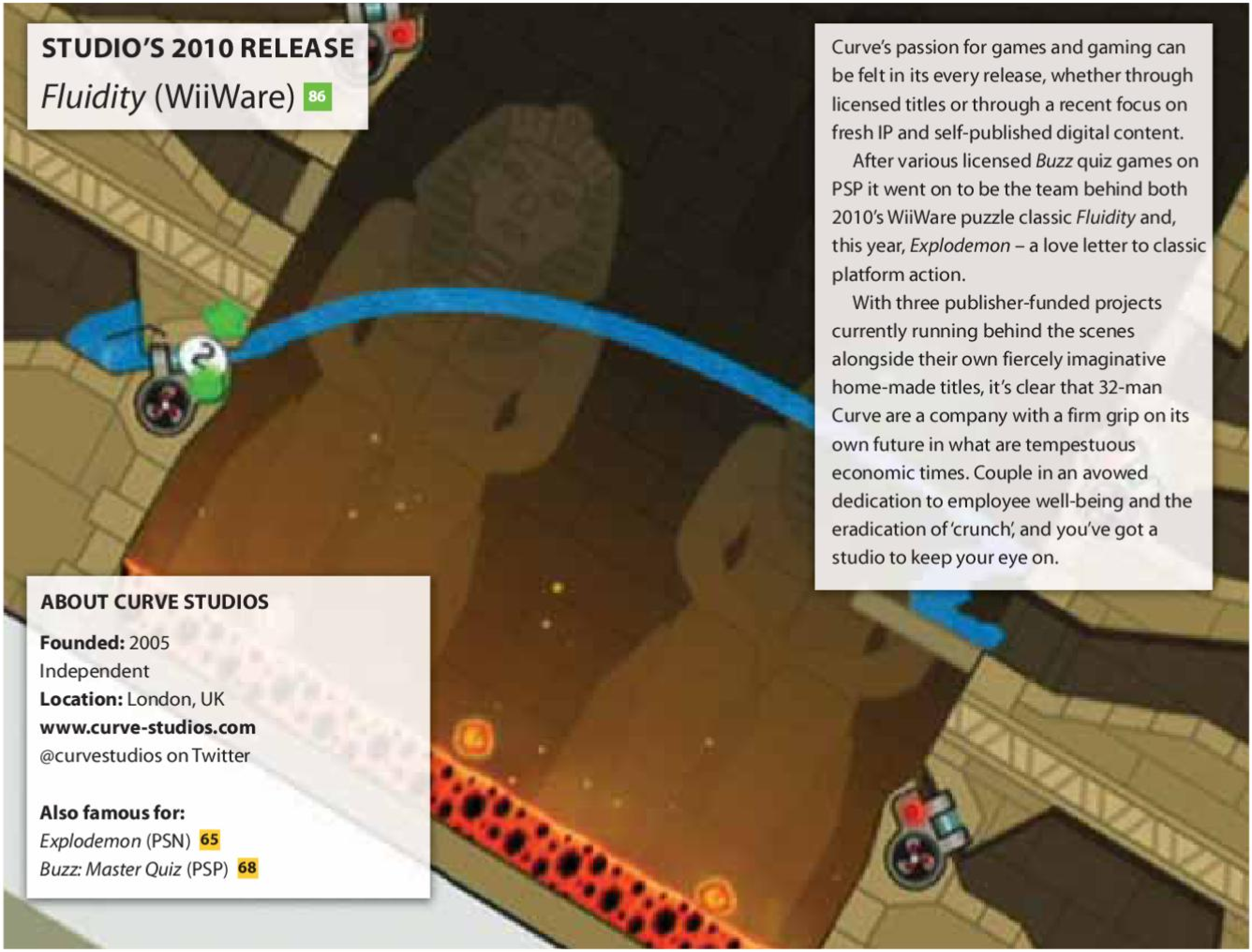
CURVE STUDIOS



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Fluidity (WiiWare) 86

Curve's passion for games and gaming can be felt in its every release, whether through licensed titles or through a recent focus on fresh IP and self-published digital content.

After various licensed *Buzz* quiz games on PSP it went on to be the team behind both 2010's WiiWare puzzle classic *Fluidity* and, this year, *Explodemon* – a love letter to classic platform action.

With three publisher-funded projects currently running behind the scenes alongside their own fiercely imaginative home-made titles, it's clear that 32-man Curve are a company with a firm grip on its own future in what are tempestuous economic times. Couple in an avowed dedication to employee well-being and the eradication of 'crunch', and you've got a studio to keep your eye on.

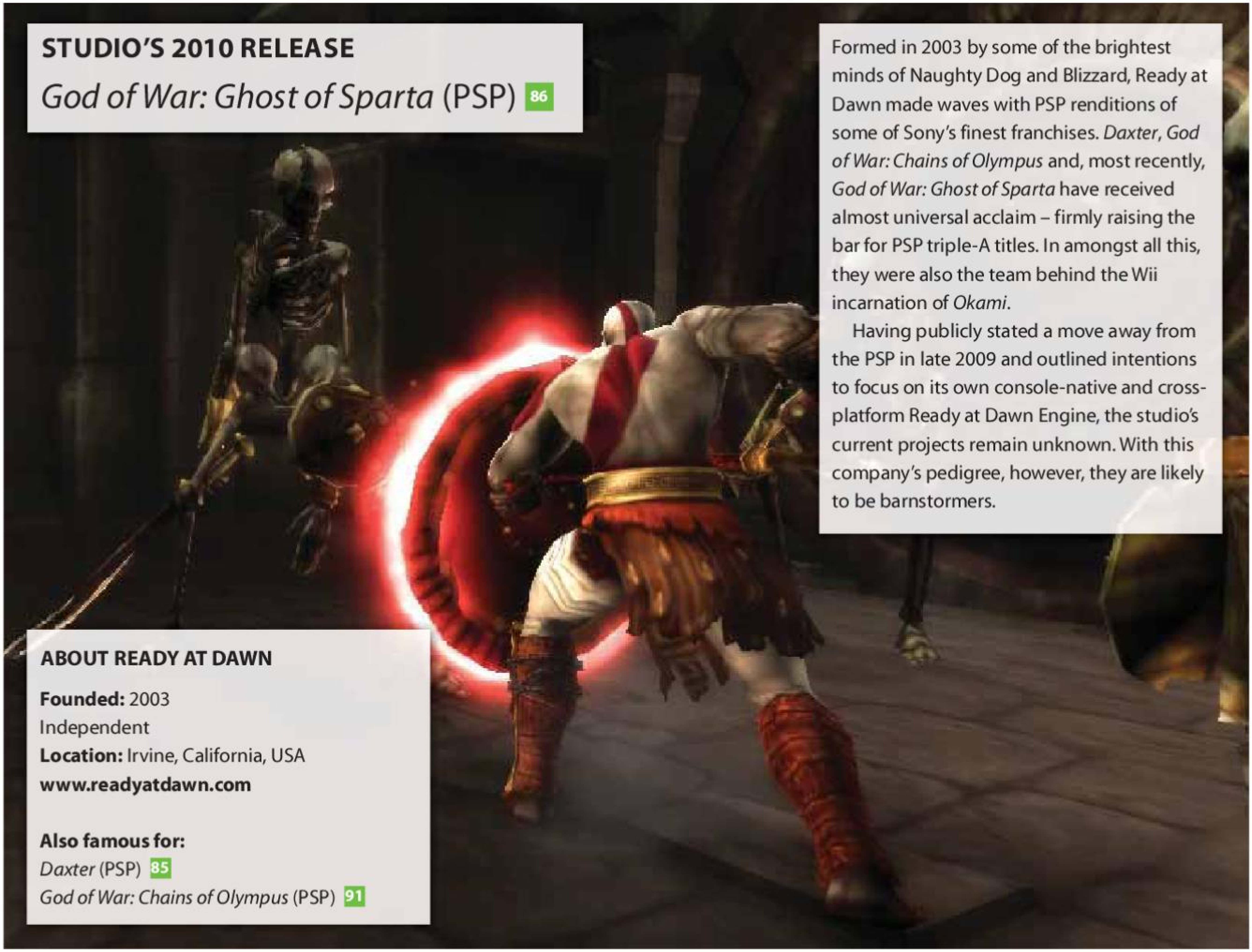
ABOUT CURVE STUDIOS

Founded: 2005
Independent
Location: London, UK
www.curve-studios.com
@curvestudios on Twitter

Also famous for:
Explodemon (PSN) 65
Buzz: Master Quiz (PSP) 68

READY AT DAWN

42



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

God of War: Ghost of Sparta (PSP) 86

Formed in 2003 by some of the brightest minds of Naughty Dog and Blizzard, Ready at Dawn made waves with PSP renditions of some of Sony's finest franchises. *Daxter*, *God of War: Chains of Olympus* and, most recently, *God of War: Ghost of Sparta* have received almost universal acclaim – firmly raising the bar for PSP triple-A titles. In amongst all this, they were also the team behind the Wii incarnation of *Okami*.

Having publicly stated a move away from the PSP in late 2009 and outlined intentions to focus on its own console-native and cross-platform Ready at Dawn Engine, the studio's current projects remain unknown. With this company's pedigree, however, they are likely to be barnstormers.

ABOUT READY AT DAWN

Founded: 2003
Independent
Location: Irvine, California, USA
www.readyatdawn.com

Also famous for:
Daxter (PSP) 85
God of War: Chains of Olympus (PSP) 91

Reliable Pathfinding Technology.
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p a b c d ai
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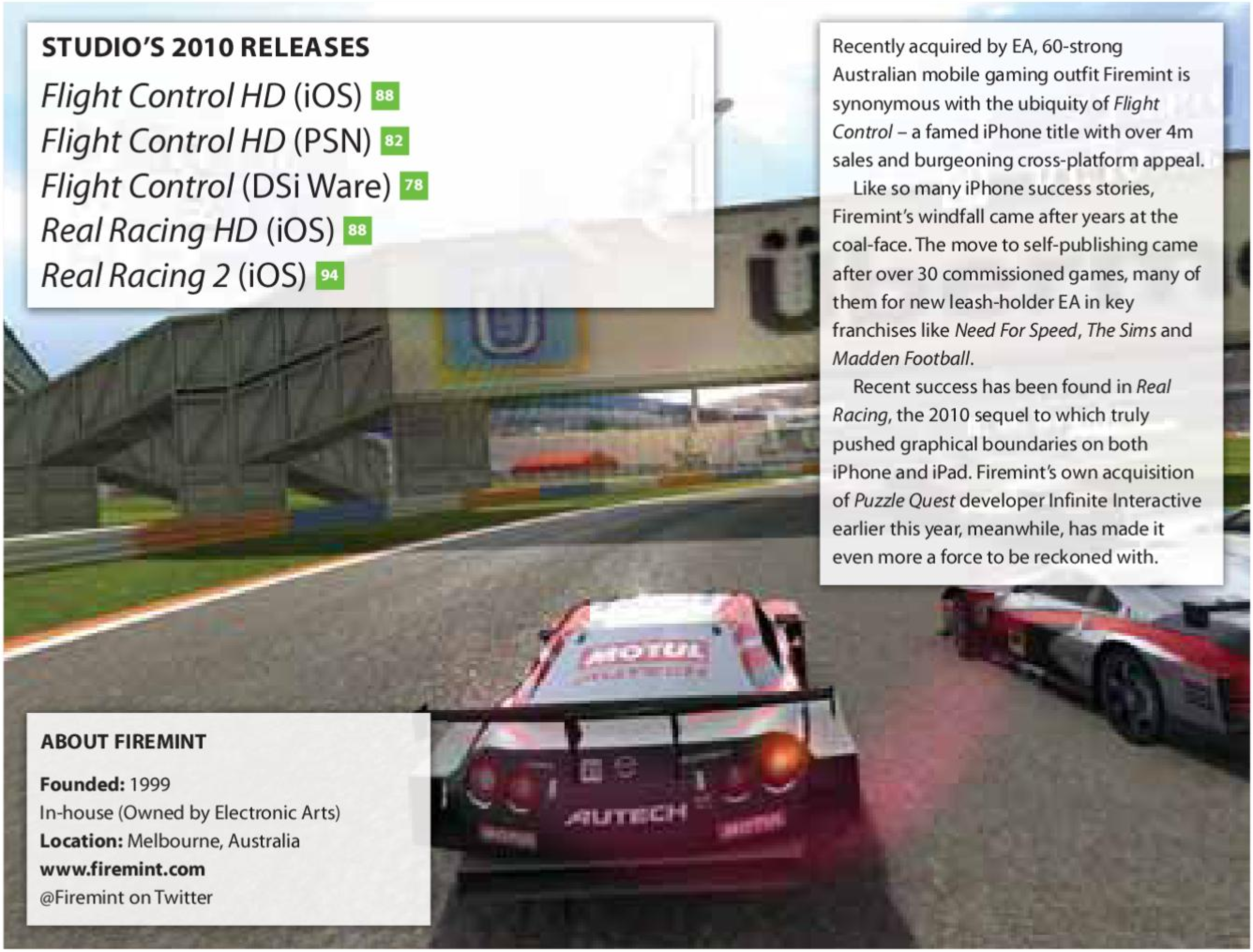
FIREMINT

43



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASES

- *Flight Control HD* (iOS) 88
- *Flight Control HD* (PSN) 82
- *Flight Control* (DSi Ware) 78
- *Real Racing HD* (iOS) 88
- *Real Racing 2* (iOS) 94

Recently acquired by EA, 60-strong Australian mobile gaming outfit Firemint is synonymous with the ubiquity of *Flight Control* – a famed iPhone title with over 4m sales and burgeoning cross-platform appeal.

Like so many iPhone success stories, Firemint's windfall came after years at the coal-face. The move to self-publishing came after over 30 commissioned games, many of them for new leash-holder EA in key franchises like *Need For Speed*, *The Sims* and *Madden Football*.

Recent success has been found in *Real Racing*, the 2010 sequel to which truly pushed graphical boundaries on both iPhone and iPad. Firemint's own acquisition of *Puzzle Quest* developer Infinite Interactive earlier this year, meanwhile, has made it even more a force to be reckoned with.

ABOUT FIREMINT

Founded: 1999
In-house (Owned by Electronic Arts)
Location: Melbourne, Australia
www.firemint.com
@Firemint on Twitter

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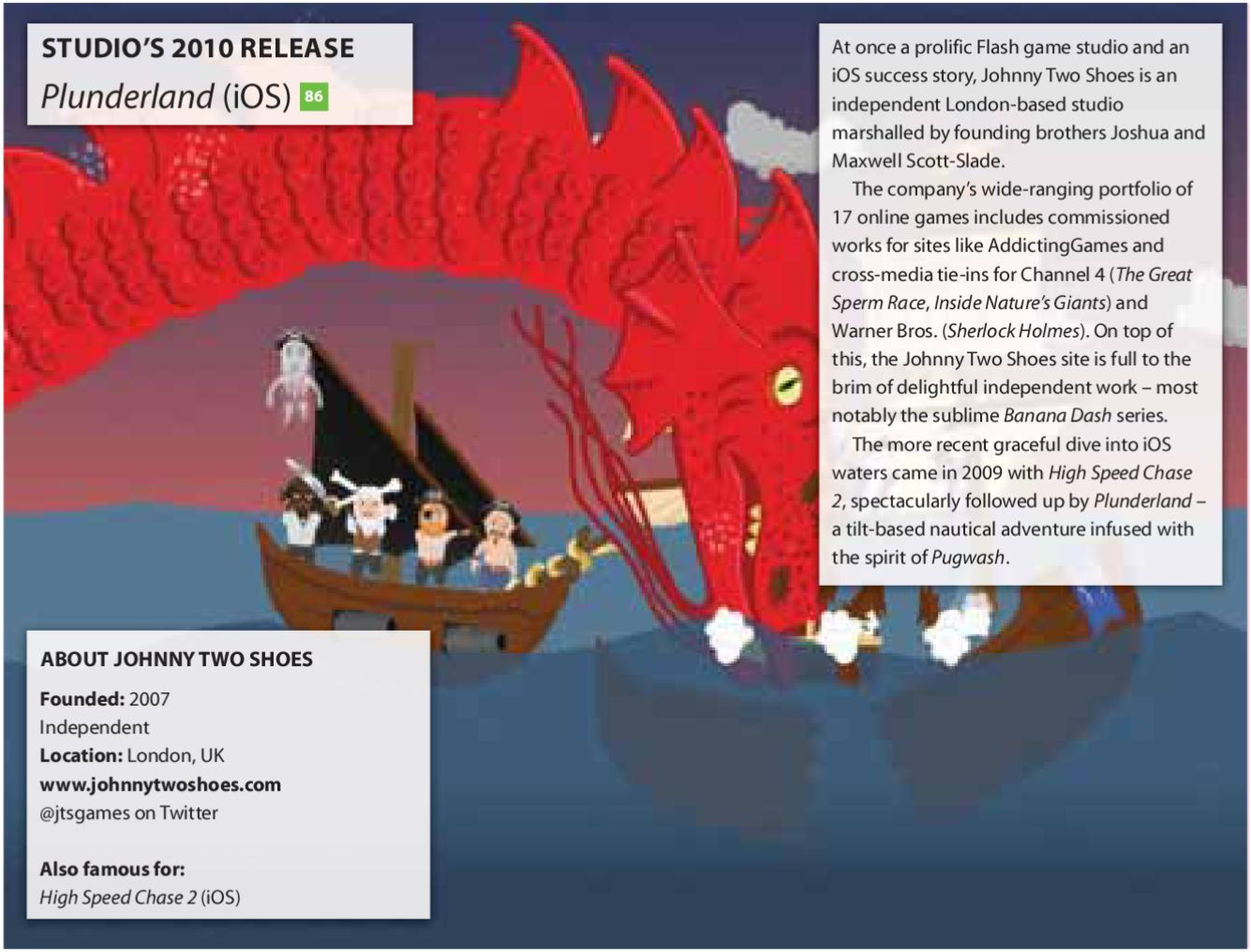
JOHNNY TWO SHOES



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Plunderland (iOS) 86

At once a prolific Flash game studio and an iOS success story, Johnny Two Shoes is an independent London-based studio marshalled by founding brothers Joshua and Maxwell Scott-Slade.

The company's wide-ranging portfolio of 17 online games includes commissioned works for sites like AddictingGames and cross-media tie-ins for Channel 4 (*The Great Sperm Race*, *Inside Nature's Giants*) and Warner Bros. (*Sherlock Holmes*). On top of this, the Johnny Two Shoes site is full to the brim of delightful independent work – most notably the sublime *Banana Dash* series.

The more recent graceful dive into iOS waters came in 2009 with *High Speed Chase 2*, spectacularly followed up by *Plunderland* – a tilt-based nautical adventure infused with the spirit of *Pugwash*.

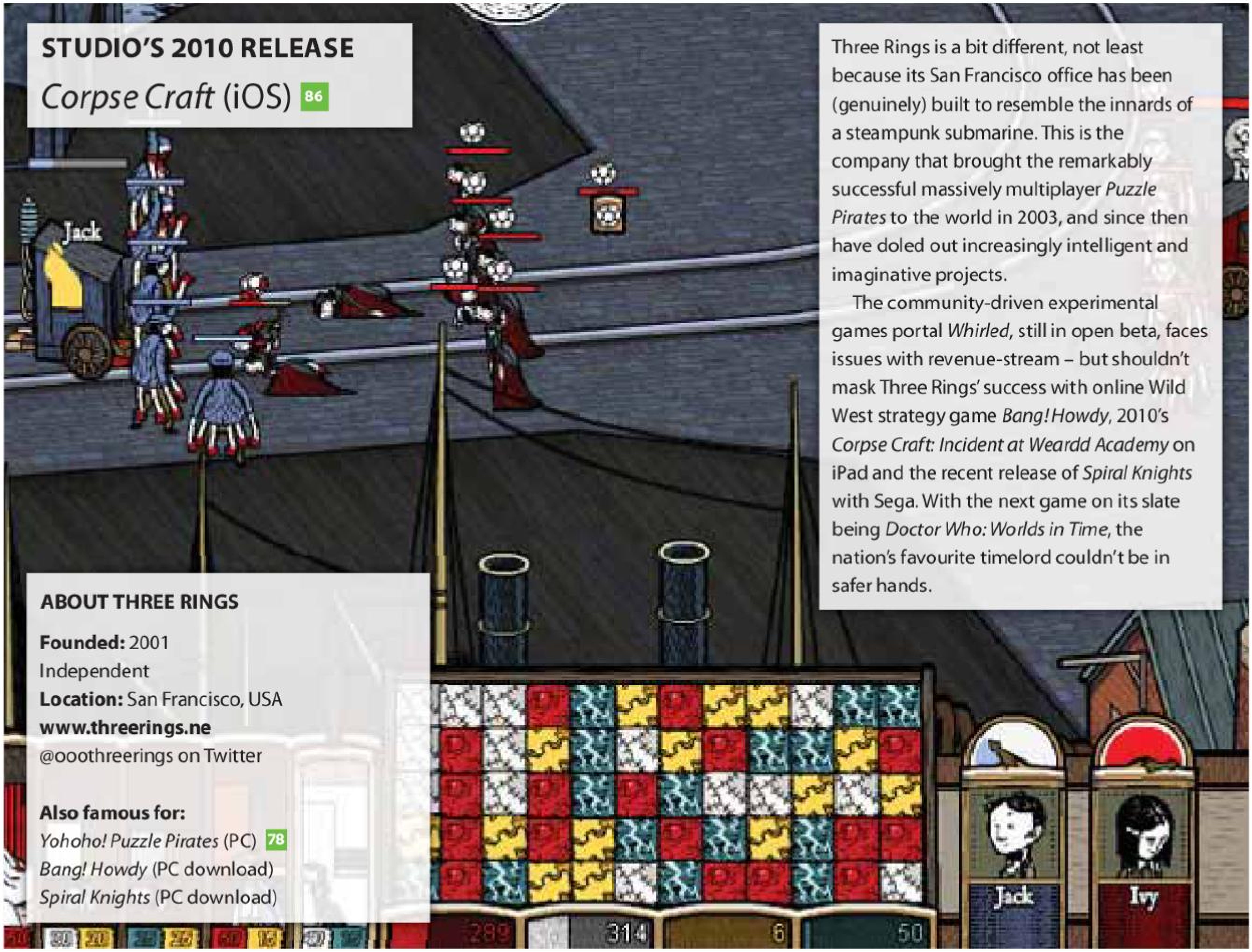
ABOUT JOHNNY TWO SHOES

Founded: 2007
Independent
Location: London, UK
www.johnnytwoshoes.com
@jtsgames on Twitter

Also famous for:
High Speed Chase 2 (iOS)

THREE RINGS

45



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Corpse Craft (iOS) 86

Three Rings is a bit different, not least because its San Francisco office has been (genuinely) built to resemble the innards of a steampunk submarine. This is the company that brought the remarkably successful massively multiplayer *Puzzle Pirates* to the world in 2003, and since then have doled out increasingly intelligent and imaginative projects.

The community-driven experimental games portal *Whirled*, still in open beta, faces issues with revenue-stream – but shouldn't mask Three Rings' success with online Wild West strategy game *Bang! Howdy*, 2010's *Corpse Craft: Incident at Weardd Academy* on iPad and the recent release of *Spiral Knights* with Sega. With the next game on its slate being *Doctor Who: Worlds in Time*, the nation's favourite timelord couldn't be in safer hands.

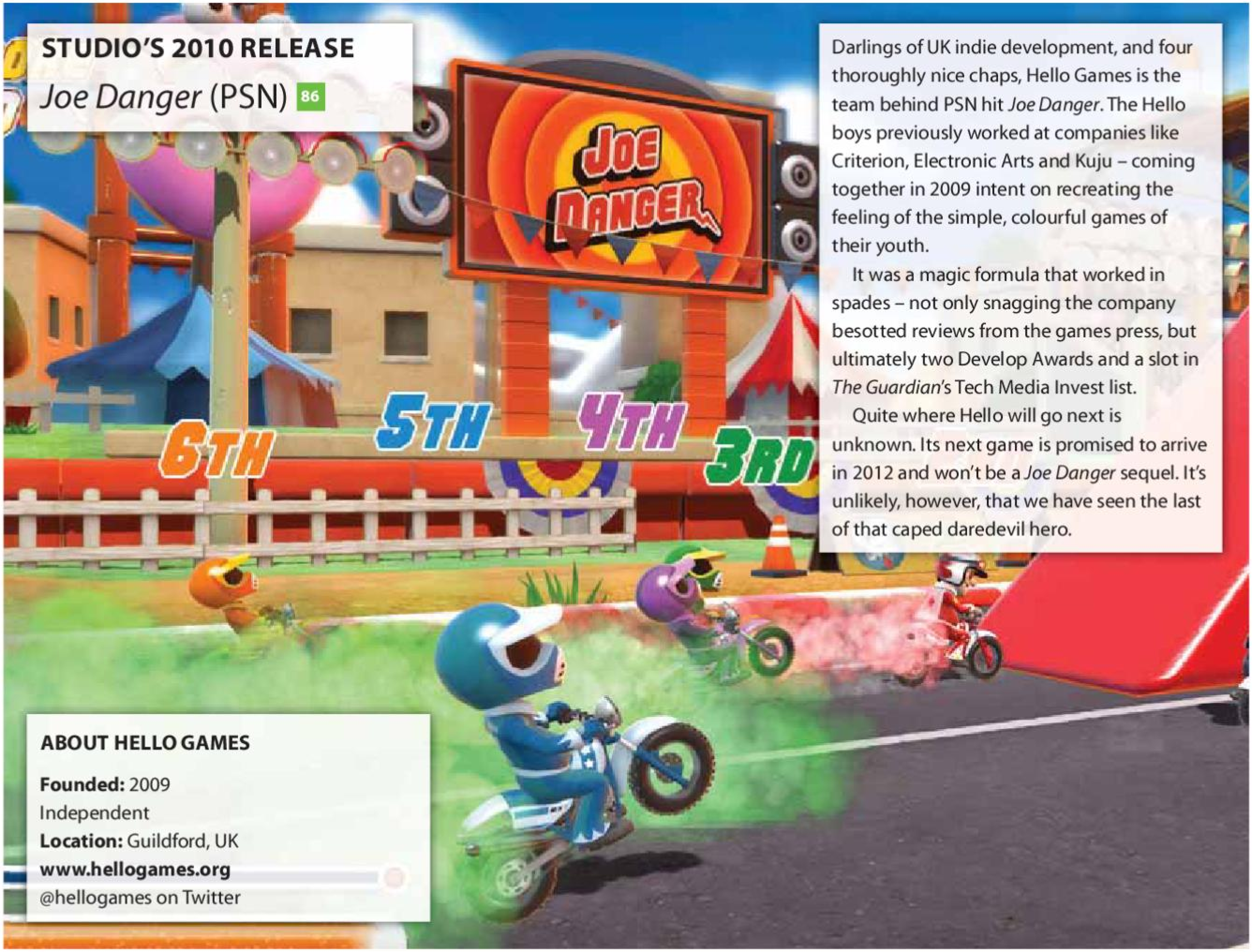
ABOUT THREE RINGS

Founded: 2001
Independent
Location: San Francisco, USA
www.threerings.ne
@ooothreerings on Twitter

Also famous for:
Yohoho! Puzzle Pirates (PC) 78
Bang! Howdy (PC download)
Spiral Knights (PC download)

46

HELLO GAMES



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Joe Danger (PSN) 86

Darlings of UK indie development, and four thoroughly nice chaps, Hello Games is the team behind PSN hit *Joe Danger*. The Hello boys previously worked at companies like Criterion, Electronic Arts and Kuju – coming together in 2009 intent on recreating the feeling of the simple, colourful games of their youth.

It was a magic formula that worked in spades – not only snagging the company besotted reviews from the games press, but ultimately two Develop Awards and a slot in *The Guardian*'s Tech Media Invest list.

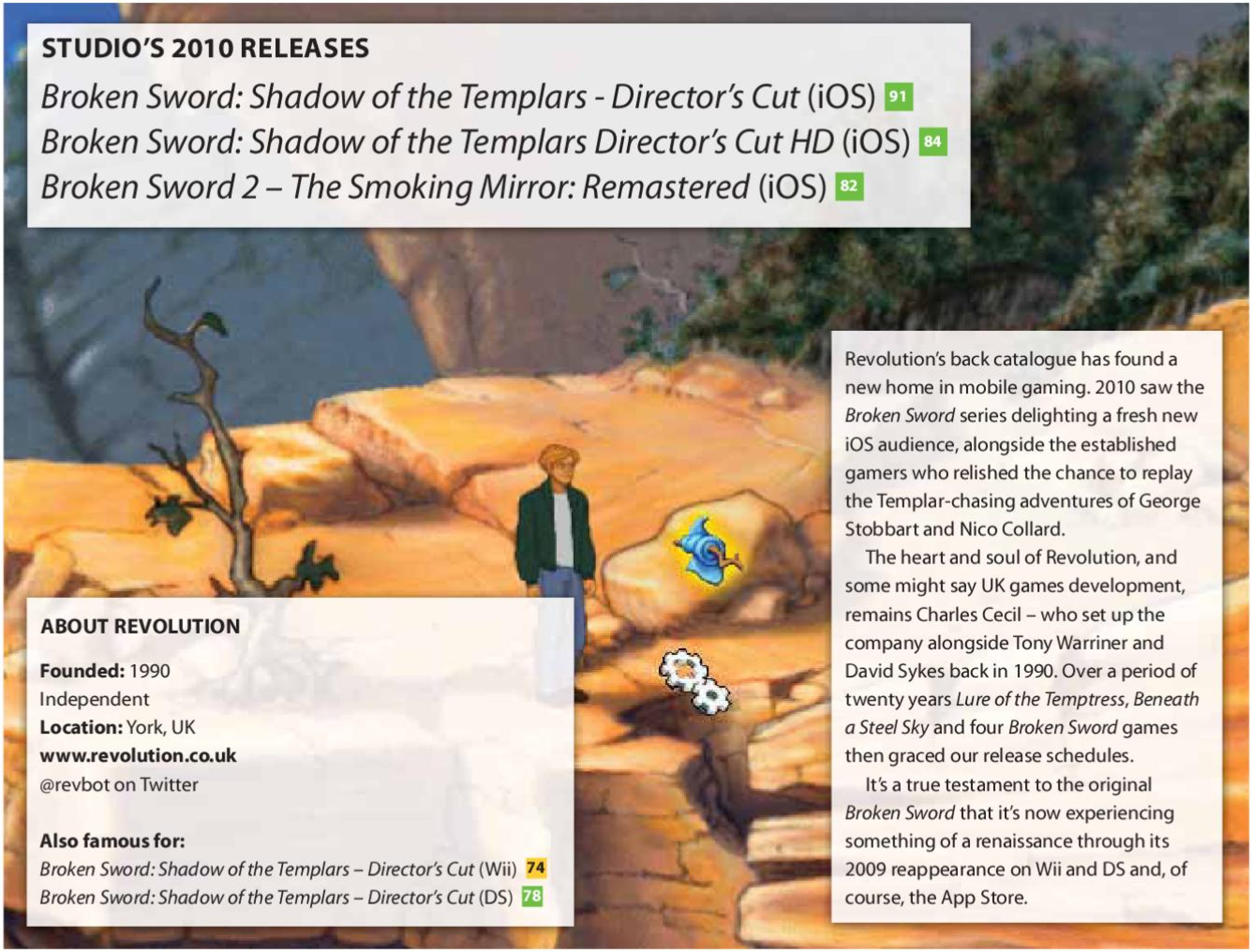
Quite where Hello will go next is unknown. Its next game is promised to arrive in 2012 and won't be a *Joe Danger* sequel. It's unlikely, however, that we have seen the last of that caped daredevil hero.

ABOUT HELLO GAMES

Founded: 2009
Independent
Location: Guildford, UK
www.hellogames.org
@hellogames on Twitter

REVOLUTION

47



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASES

Broken Sword: Shadow of the Templars - Director's Cut (iOS) 91
Broken Sword: Shadow of the Templars Director's Cut HD (iOS) 84
Broken Sword 2 – The Smoking Mirror: Remastered (iOS) 82

ABOUT REVOLUTION

Founded: 1990
Independent
Location: York, UK
www.revolution.co.uk
@revbot on Twitter

Also famous for:
Broken Sword: Shadow of the Templars – Director's Cut (Wii) 74
Broken Sword: Shadow of the Templars – Director's Cut (DS) 78

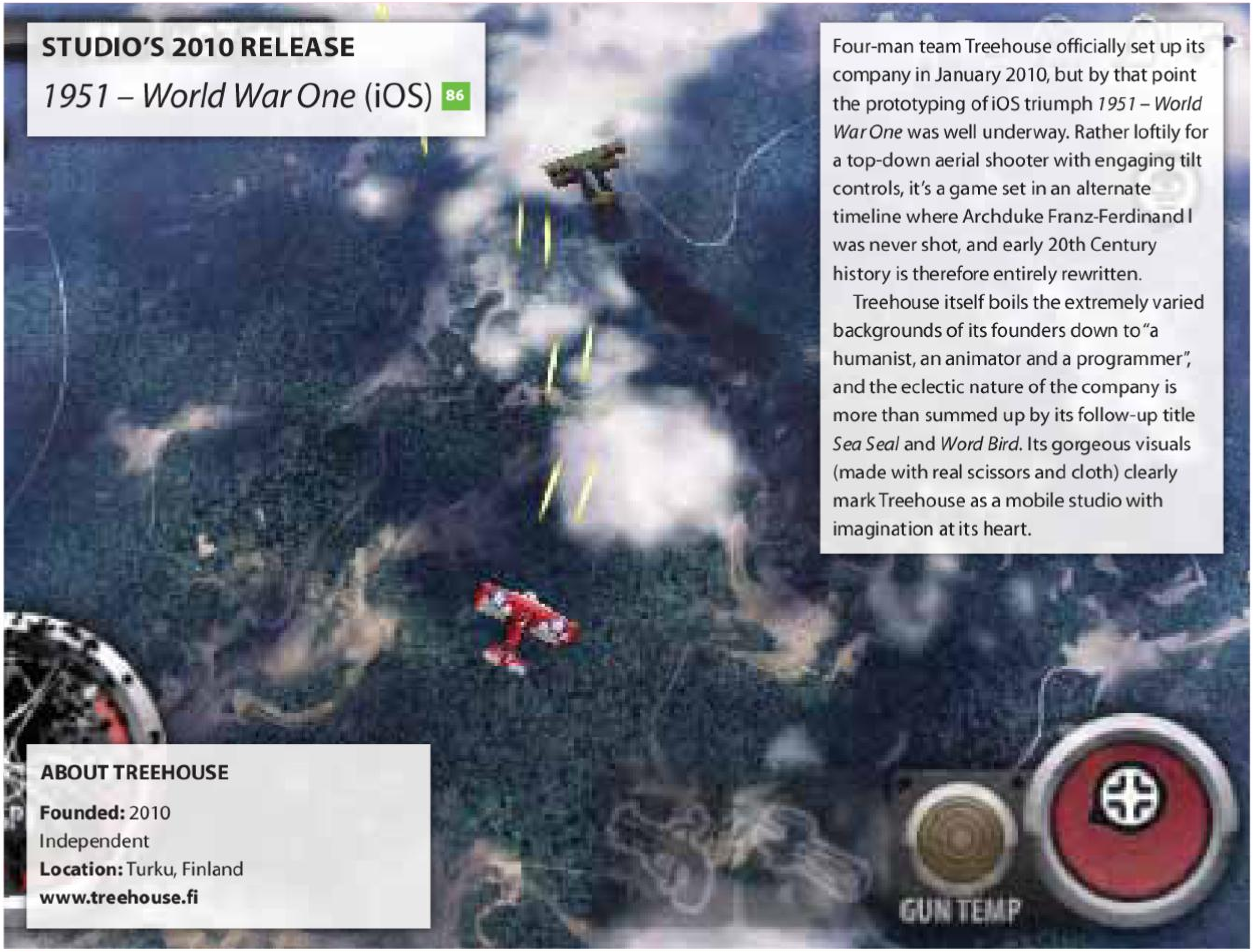
Revolution's back catalogue has found a new home in mobile gaming. 2010 saw the *Broken Sword* series delighting a fresh new iOS audience, alongside the established gamers who relished the chance to replay the Templar-chasing adventures of George Stobbart and Nico Collard.

The heart and soul of Revolution, and some might say UK games development, remains Charles Cecil – who set up the company alongside Tony Warriner and David Sykes back in 1990. Over a period of twenty years *Lure of the Temptress*, *Beneath a Steel Sky* and four *Broken Sword* games then graced our release schedules.

It's a true testament to the original *Broken Sword* that it's now experiencing something of a renaissance through its 2009 reappearance on Wii and DS and, of course, the App Store.

48

TREEHOUSE



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

1951 – World War One (iOS) 86

Four-man team Treehouse officially set up its company in January 2010, but by that point the prototyping of iOS triumph *1951 – World War One* was well underway. Rather loftily for a top-down aerial shooter with engaging tilt controls, it's a game set in an alternate timeline where Archduke Franz-Ferdinand I was never shot, and early 20th Century history is therefore entirely rewritten.

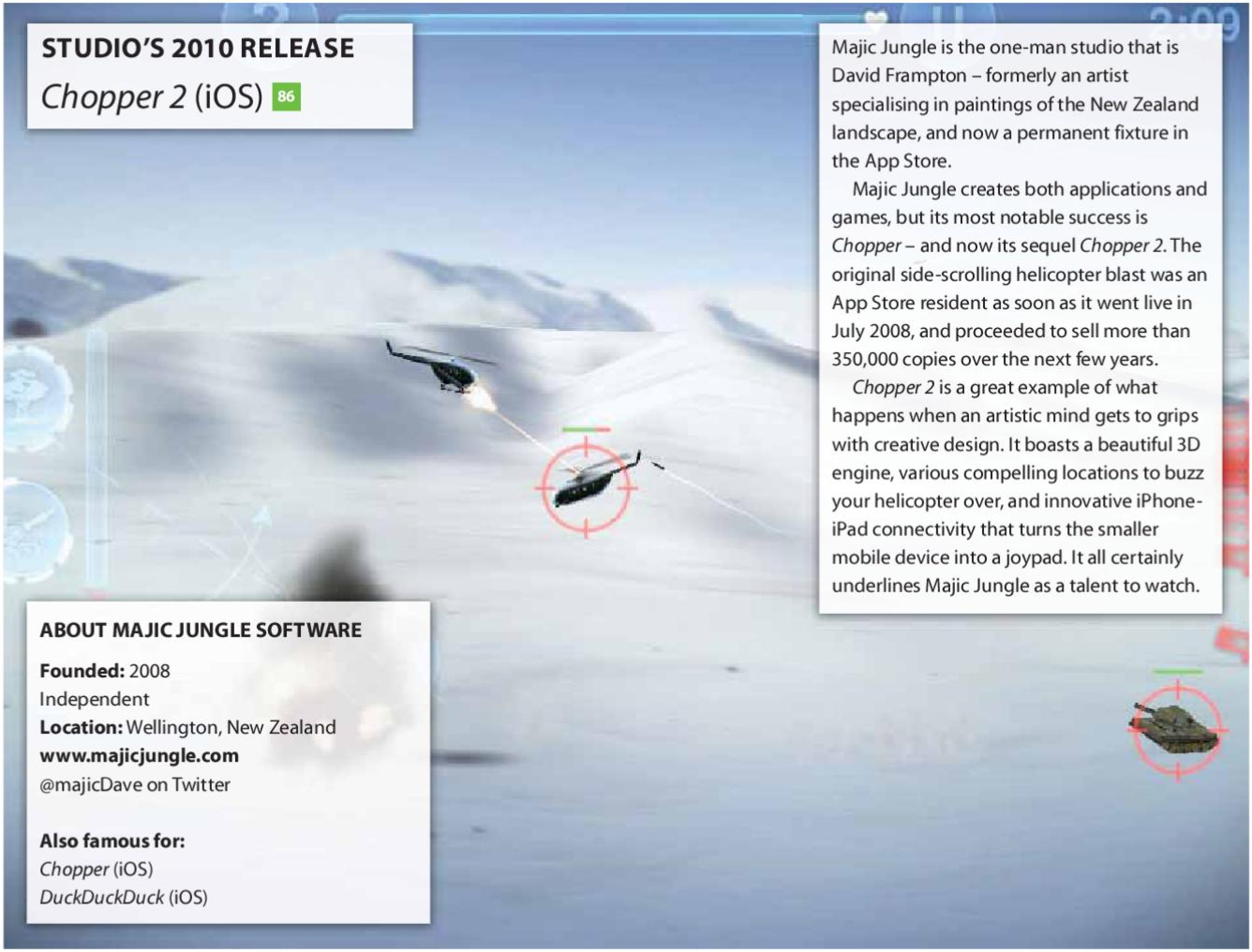
Treehouse itself boils the extremely varied backgrounds of its founders down to "a humanist, an animator and a programmer", and the eclectic nature of the company is more than summed up by its follow-up title *Sea Seal* and *Word Bird*. Its gorgeous visuals (made with real scissors and cloth) clearly mark Treehouse as a mobile studio with imagination at its heart.

ABOUT TREEHOUSE

Founded: 2010
Independent
Location: Turku, Finland
www.treehouse.fi

MAJIC JUNGLE SOFTWARE

49



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

Chopper 2 (iOS) 86

Majic Jungle is the one-man studio that is David Frampton – formerly an artist specialising in paintings of the New Zealand landscape, and now a permanent fixture in the App Store.

Majic Jungle creates both applications and games, but its most notable success is *Chopper* – and now its sequel *Chopper 2*. The original side-scrolling helicopter blast was an App Store resident as soon as it went live in July 2008, and proceeded to sell more than 350,000 copies over the next few years.

Chopper 2 is a great example of what happens when an artistic mind gets to grips with creative design. It boasts a beautiful 3D engine, various compelling locations to buzz your helicopter over, and innovative iPhone-iPad connectivity that turns the smaller mobile device into a joypad. It all certainly underlines Majic Jungle as a talent to watch.

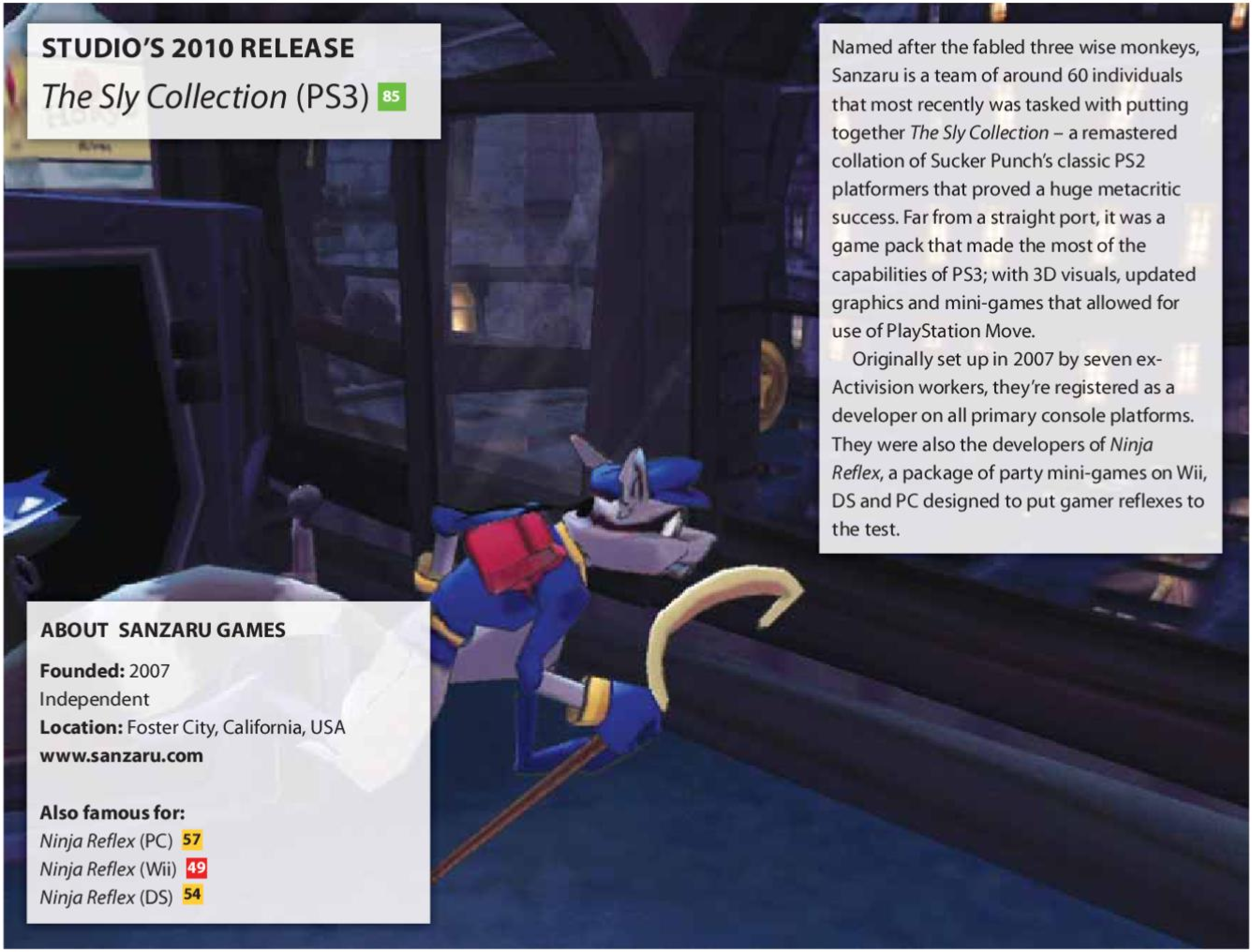
ABOUT MAJIC JUNGLE SOFTWARE

Founded: 2008
Independent
Location: Wellington, New Zealand
www.majicjungle.com
@majicDave on Twitter

Also famous for:
Chopper (iOS)
DuckDuckDuck (iOS)

50

SANZARU GAMES



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE

The Sly Collection (PS3) 85

Named after the fabled three wise monkeys, Sanzaru is a team of around 60 individuals that most recently was tasked with putting together *The Sly Collection* – a remastered collation of Sucker Punch's classic PS2 platformers that proved a huge metacritic success. Far from a straight port, it was a game pack that made the most of the capabilities of PS3; with 3D visuals, updated graphics and mini-games that allowed for use of PlayStation Move.

Originally set up in 2007 by seven ex-Activision workers, they're registered as a developer on all primary console platforms. They were also the developers of *Ninja Reflex*, a package of party mini-games on Wii, DS and PC designed to put gamer reflexes to the test.

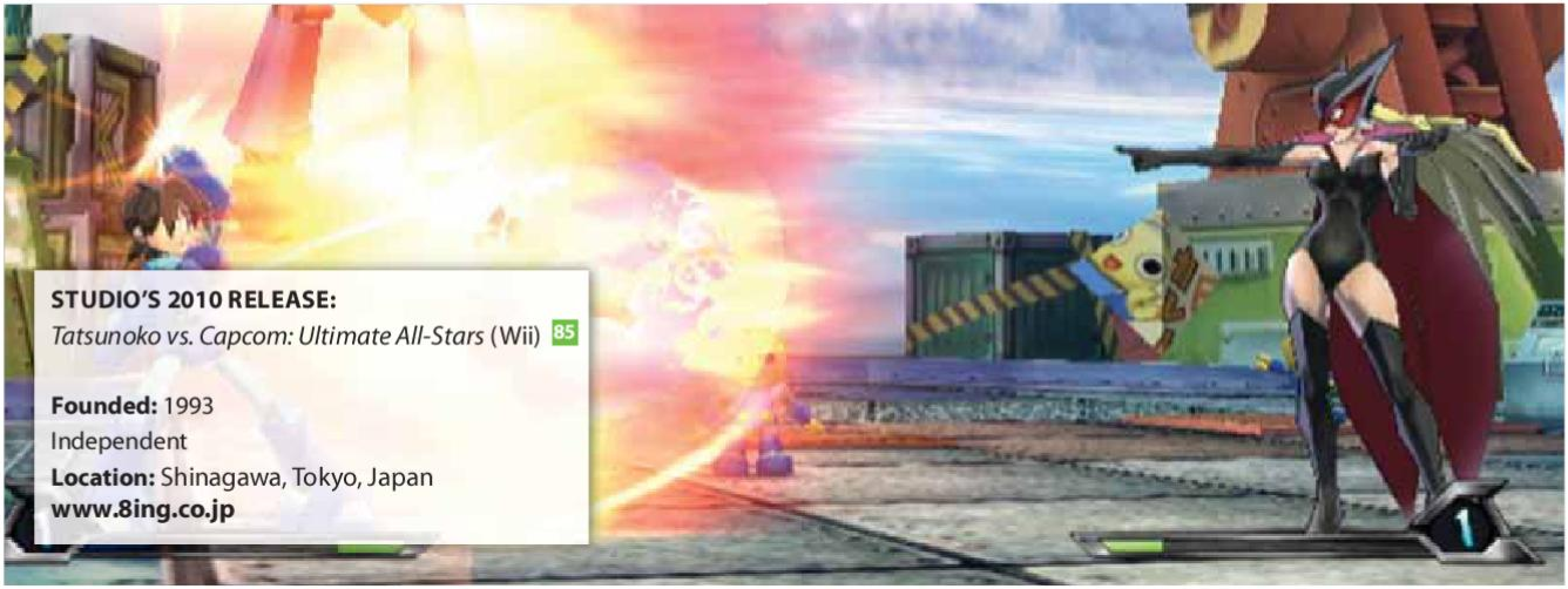
ABOUT SANZARU GAMES

Founded: 2007
Independent
Location: Foster City, California, USA
www.sanzaru.com

Also famous for:
Ninja Reflex (PC) 57
Ninja Reflex (Wii) 49
Ninja Reflex (DS) 54

51

EIGHTING

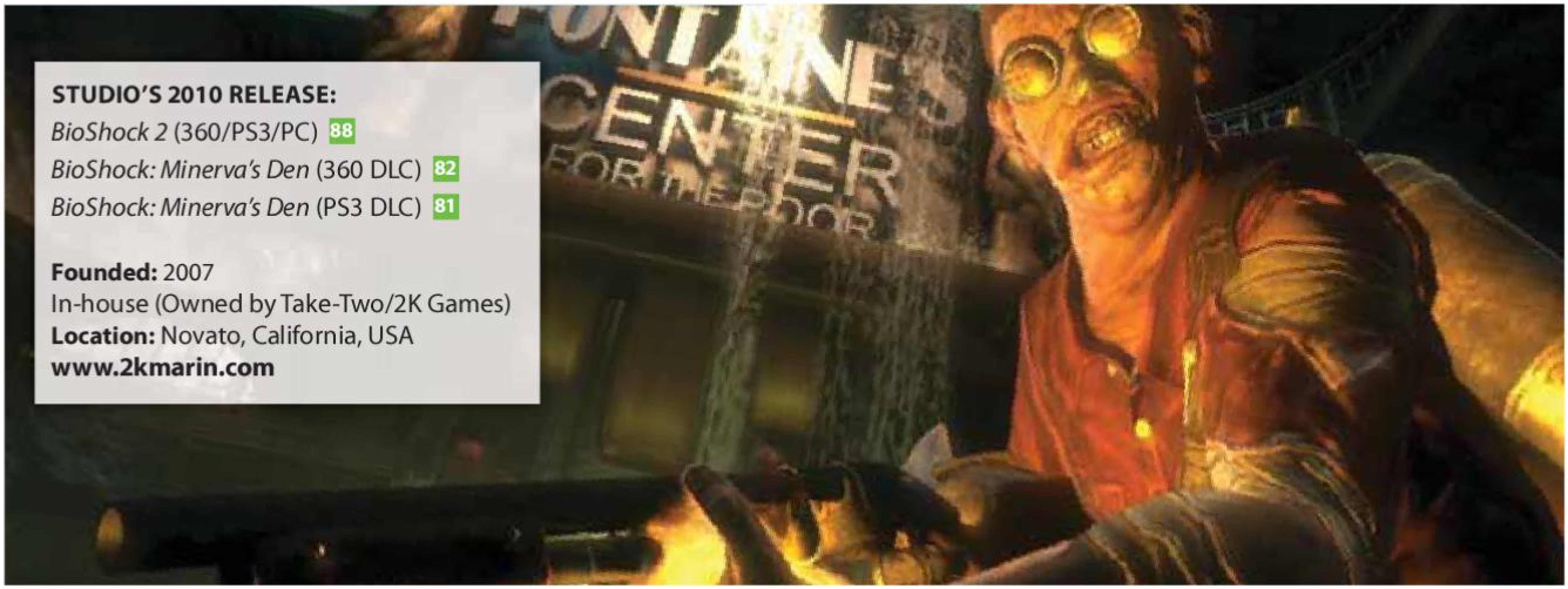


STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Tatsunoko vs. Capcom: Ultimate All-Stars (Wii) 85

Founded: 1993
Independent
Location: Shinagawa, Tokyo, Japan
www.8ing.co.jp

52

2K MARIN



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
BioShock 2 (360/PS3/PC) 88
BioShock: Minerva's Den (360 DLC) 82
BioShock: Minerva's Den (PS3 DLC) 81

Founded: 2007
In-house (Owned by Take-Two/2K Games)
Location: Novato, California, USA
www.2kmarin.com

53

THE BEHEMOTH

4 PLAYER ADVENTU
START GAME
ALL YOU CAN QUAFF

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Castle Crashers (PS3) 85

Founded: 2002
Independent
Location: San Diego, California, US
www.thebehemoth.com
@thebehemoth on Twitter

54

STRAANDLOOPER

What is this? GTA?

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Hector: Badge of Carnage Ep 1 (iOS) 85

Founded: 2008
Independent
Location: Donaghadee, County Down, Northern Ireland
www.strandlooper.com
@Straandlooper on Twitter

55

PIXELOCITY SOFTWARE

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Disc Drivin' (iOS) 85

Founded: 2010
Independent
Location: Dallas, Texas, US
www.pixelocitysoftware.com
@PixelocitySW on Twitter

56

BAD MONKEE

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Giana Sisters (iOS) 85

Founded: 2009
Independent
Location: Duesseldorf, Germany
www.badmonkee.de
@BadMonkeeGames on Twitter

57 INDEEO

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Air Strike Defense (iOS) 85

Founded: 2009
Independent
Location: Palo Alto, California, US
www.indeeo.com

58 RELIC

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Warhammer 40,000: Dawn of War II – Chaos Rising (PC) 85

Founded: 1997
In-house (Owned by THQ)
Location: Vancouver, Canada
www.relic.com
@relicgames on Twitter

59 ARC SYSTEM WORKS

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASES:
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift (PS3) 87 (360) 85
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger Portal (PSP) 82

Founded: 1988
Independent
Location: Yokohama, Japan
www.arcsystemworks.jp

60 FALLEN TREE GAMES

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Quell (iOS) 84

Founded: 2010
Independent
Location: UK
www.fallentreegames.com

61

GRASSHOPPER MANUFACTURE

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:

No More Heroes 2: Desperate Struggle (Wii) 84

Founded: 1998
Independent
Location: Suginami, Tokyo, Japan
www.grasshopper.co.jp
@GrasshoppperEN on Twitter

62

RETRO DREAMER

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:

Linkoidz (iOS) 84

Founded: 2009
Independent
Location: Los Angeles, California, US
www.retrodreamer.com
@retro_dreamer on Twitter

63

OTHERWISE GAMES

Name the movie.
TIME
CORE
1,2

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:

MovieCat! (iOS) 84

Independent
Location: US
www.moviecatgame.com
@moviecatgame on Twitter

64

TREYARCH

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASES:

Call of Duty: Black Ops (PS3) 88 (360) 87 (PC) 81 (Wii) 80

Founded: 1996
In-house (Owned by Activision)
Location: Santa Monica, California, US
www.treyarch.com
@Treyarch on Twitter

65

MERCURY STEAM

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Castlevania: Lords of Shadow (PS3) 85 (360) 83

Founded: 2002
Independent
Location: Madrid, Spain
www.mercurysteam.com

66

POPCAP GAMES

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASES:
Plants vs. Zombies HD (iOS) 93
Plants vs. Zombies (iOS) 92 (360) 89
Bejeweled 3 (PC) 82 *Twist* (DS) 76 *2* (Wii) 70

Founded: 2000
Independent
Location: Seattle, Washington, US
www.popcap.com
@popcap_games on Twitter

67

PLATINUMGAMES

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASES:
Bayonetta (360) 90 (PS3) 87
Vanquish (360/PS3) 84
Infinite Space (DS) 75

Founded: 2006
Independent
Location: Osaka, Japan
www.platinumgames.com
@platinumgames on Twitter

68

POLYPHONY DIGITAL

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Gran Turismo 5 (PS3) 84

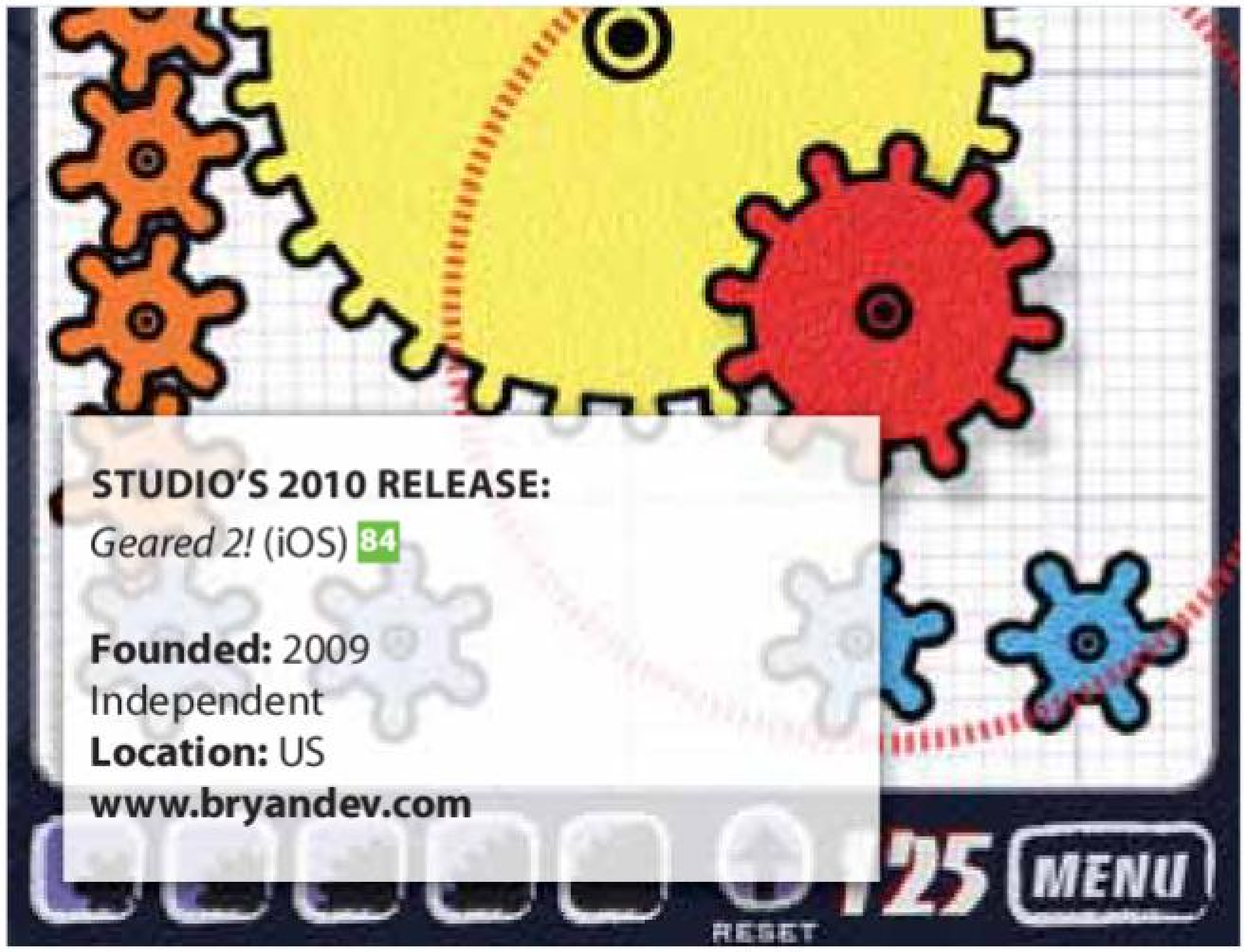
Founded: 1998
In-house (Owned by SCE)
Location: Tokyo, Japan
www.polyphony.co.jp

69 CODEMASTERS BIRMINGHAM

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
F1 2010 (PC, PS3, 360) 84

Founded: 2008
In-house (Owned by Codemasters)
Location: Birmingham, UK
www.codemasters.com

70 BRYAN MITCHELL



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Geared 2! (iOS) 84

Founded: 2009
Independent
Location: US
www.bryandev.com

71 CRYSTAL DYNAMICS

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Lara Croft and the Guardian of Light
(360) 85 (PS3) 84 (PC) 82

Founded: 1992
In-house (Owned by Square Enix)
Location: Redwood City, California, US
www.crystald.com
@CrystalDynamics on Twitter

72 ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASES:
Red Dead Redemption (PS3/360) 95
RDR: Undead Nightmare (PSN, XBLA) 87
RDR: Liars & Cheats (PSN) 80 (XBLA) 77
RDR: Legends & Killers (PSN) 64 (XBLA) 61

Founded: 1984
In-house (Owned by Rockstar Games)
Location: Carlsbad, California, US
www.rockstarsandiego.com
@RockstarGames on Twitter

73 BIG PIXEL STUDIOS

RETINA GRAPHICS

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASES:

Piyo Blocks 2 (iOS) 90

Meow Meow Happy Fight (iOS) 77

Founded: 2009
Independent
Location: London, UK
www.bigpixelstudios.co.uk
@BigPixelStudios on Twitter

74 SIMOGO

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:

Kosmo Spin (iOS) 83

Founded: 2010
Independent
Location: Malmö, Sweden
www.simogo.com
@simogogames on Twitter

75 MADFINGER GAMES

1250
14 Hits!
SAMURAI 2 WORK IN PROGRESS © MADFINGERGAMES.com

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:

Samurai II: Vengeance (iOS) 83

Founded: 2009
Independent
Location: Brno, Czech Republic
www.madfingergames.com
@MADFINGERGames on Twitter

76 CHAOTIC BOX

SCORE: 7,622,579
MAX!
HISCORE: 2,045,131

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:

Silverfish (iOS) 83

Founded: 2005
Independent
Location: Toronto, Canada
www.chaoticbox.com
@ChaoticBox on Twitter

77

LAZY 8 STUDIOS

TIME 03:39
04:25

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Cogs (iOS) 83

Founded: 2008
Independent
Location: San Francisco, California, US
www.lazy8studios.com
@lazy8studios on Twitter

78

CAVE

1P- 154720
HIGH- 154720
PRESS 2P START

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASES:
Dodonpachi Ressurection (iOS) 89
Espgaluda II (iOS) 88
Mushihimesama Bug Panic (iOS) 86
Guwange (360) 76
DeathSmiles (360) 76

Founded: 1994
Independent
Location: Shinjuku, Tokyo, Japan
www.caveinteractive.com
@cave_world_en on Twitter

79

THE ICONFACTORY

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Astronut (iOS) 83

Founded: 1996
Independent
Location: Greensboro, North Carolina, US
www.iconfactory.com
@Iconfactory on Twitter

80

IMANGI STUDIOS

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Max Adventure (iOS) 83

Founded: 2008
Independent
Location: Washington DC, Maryland, US
www.imangistudios.com
@imangi on Twitter

81

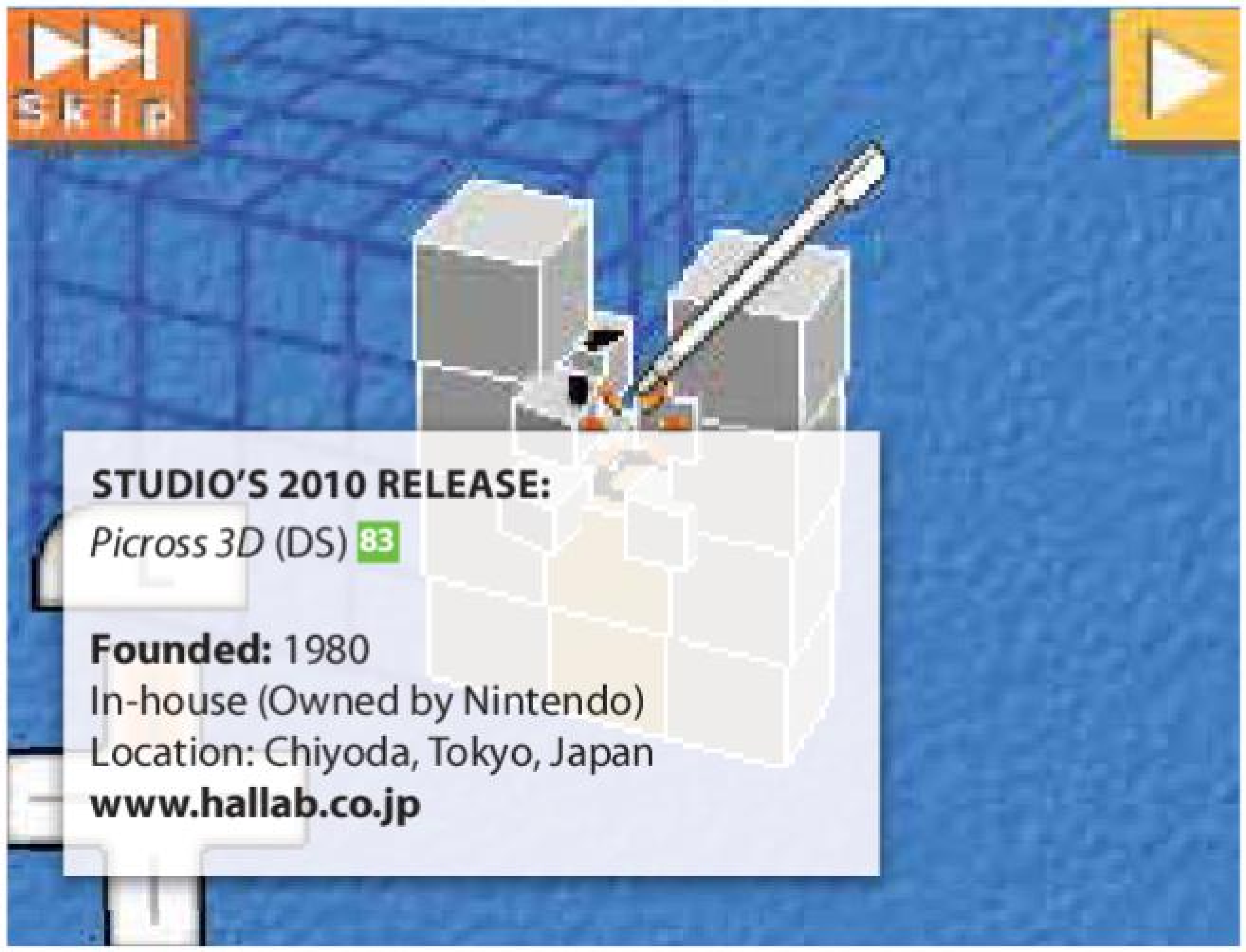
PROJECT SOUL

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Dinosaur Slayer (iOS) 83

Independent
Location: South Korea
www.projectsoulgame.com

82

HAL LABS



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Picross 3D (DS) 83

Founded: 1980
In-house (Owned by Nintendo)
Location: Chiyoda, Tokyo, Japan
www.hallab.co.jp

83

HARMONIX MUSIC SYSTEMS

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASES:
Rock Band 3 (360) 93 (PS3/Wii) 91
Dance Central (360) 82
Rock Band 3 (DS) 79
Green Day: Rock Band (Wii/PS3) 76 (360) 75 75

Founded: 1995
Independent
Location: Cambridge, Massachusetts, US
www.harmonixmusic.com

84

WANDAKE

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Robokill – Rescue Titan Prime (iOS) 83

Independent
Location: India
www.wandake.com
@wandakegames on Twitter

85

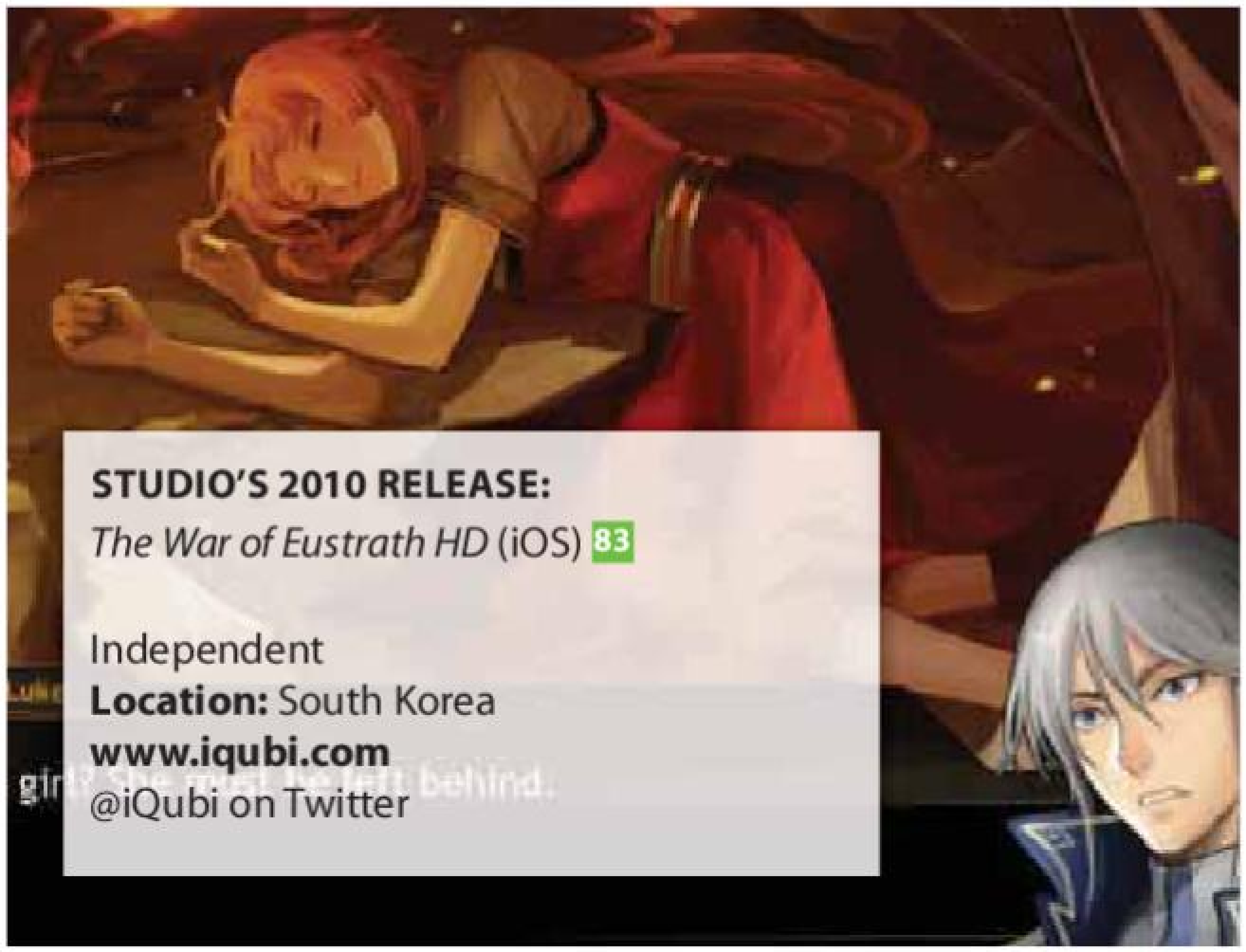
FUNCOM

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Age of Conan: Rise of the Godslayer (PC) 83

Founded: 1993
Independent
Location: Oslo, Norway
www.funcom.com
@funcom on Twitter

86

IQUBI



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
The War of Eustrath HD (iOS) 83

Independent
Location: South Korea
www.iqubi.com
@iQubi on Twitter

87

INDIAGAMES

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Bruce Lee: Dragon Warrior (iOS) 83

Independent
Location: Mubai, India
www.indiagames.com

88

TU WIEN

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
And Yet It Moves (Wii) 83
(co-developed with studio No.89, Broken Rules)

Independent
Location: Vienna, Austria
www.tuwien.ac.at

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SlidetoPlay, Nov. 2, 2010

"The best space adventure on iDevices so far."
Touchgen, Oct. 27, 2010

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More info at www.fishlabs.net

89

BROKEN RULES

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
And Yet It Moves (Wii) 83
(co-developed with studio No.88 Tu Wien)

Independent
Location: Vienna, Austria
www.brokenrul.es
@brokenrules on Twitter

90

AVALANCHE STUDIOS

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASES:
Just Cause 2 (PC) 84 (PS3) 83 (360) 81

Founded: 2003
Independent
Location: Stockholm, Sweden
www.avalanchestudios.se
@AvalancheSweden on Twitter

91

VIGIL GAMES

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASES:
Darksiders (PC/360) 83 (PS3) 82

Founded: 2005
In-house (Owned by THQ)
Location: Austin, Texas
www.vigilgames.com
@vigilgames on Twitter

92

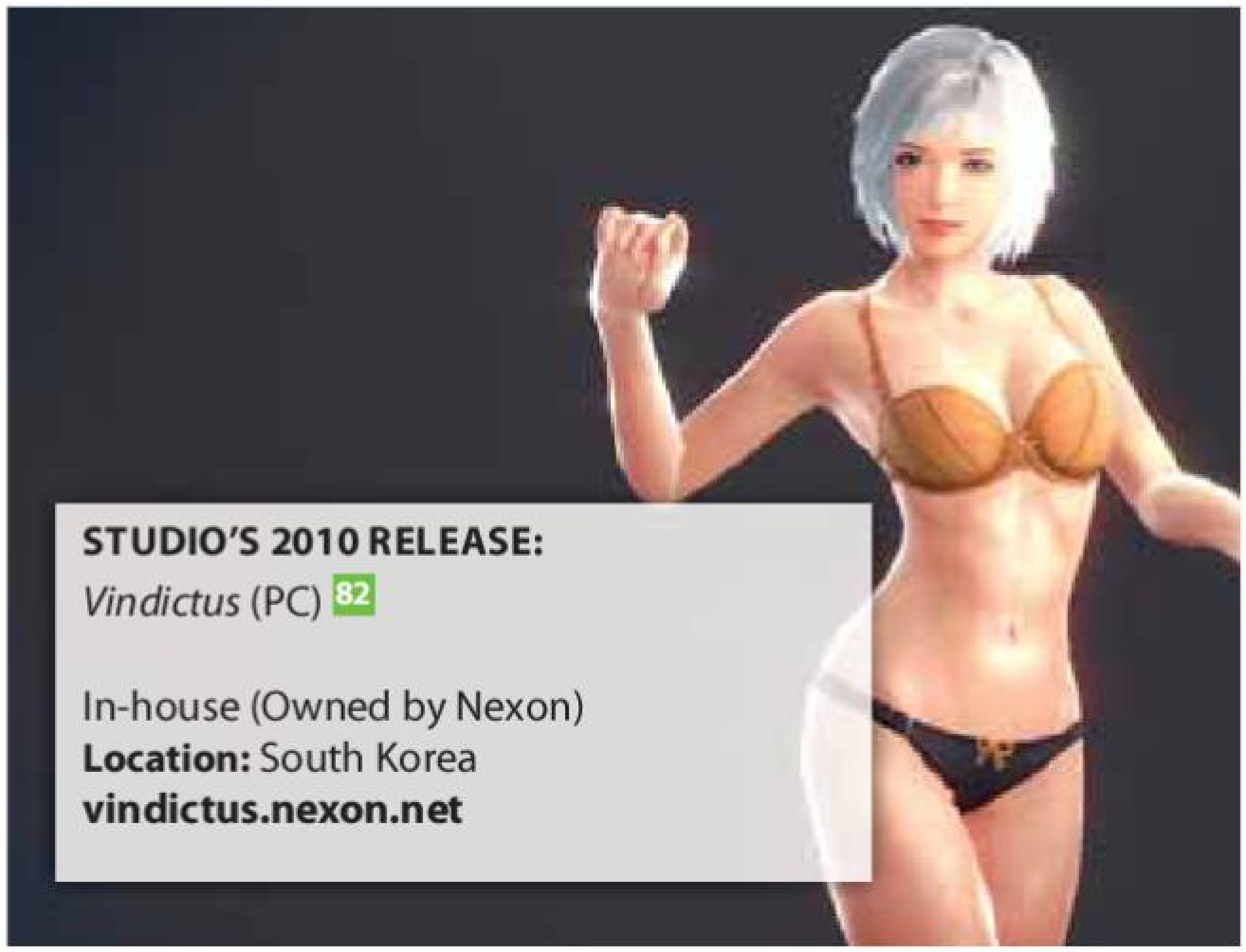
OTHER OCEAN INTERACTIVE

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASES:
Dark Void Zero (DS) 84 (iOS) 81

Founded: 2007
Independent
Location: Charlottetown, Canada
www.otherocean.com

93

DEVCAT



STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Vindictus (PC) 82

In-house (Owned by Nexon)
Location: South Korea
vindictus.nexon.net

94

ATLUS

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASES:
Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3 Portable (PSP) 91
Trauma Team (Wii) 82
Shin Megami Tensei: Strange Journey (DS) 80
Etrian Odyssey III: The Drowned City (DS) 77

Founded: 1986
In-house (Owned by Index Holdings)
Location: Shinjuku, Tokyo, Japan
www.atlus.com
@atlus_jp on Twitter

95

BIG BUCKET SOFTWARE

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
The Incident (iOS) 82

Independent
Location: Perth, Australia
www.bigbucketsoftware.com
@mattcomi on Twitter

96

MINICLIP.COM

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASES:
Fragger (iOS) 86
Gravity Guy (iOS) 79

Founded: 2001
Independent
Location: Neuchâtel, Switzerland
www.miniclip.com
@miniclip on Twitter

97

SPACETIME STUDIOS

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Pocket Legends (iOS) 82

Founded: 2005
Independent
Location: Austin, Texas, USA
www.spacetimestudios.com
@spacetimegames on Twitter

98

BIGSTACK STUDIOS

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Sigma (iOS) 82

Founded: 2003
Independent
Location: Calgary, Alberta, Canada
www.bigstackstudios.com
@BigStackStudios on Twitter

99

BLUE CARROT GAMES

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Axe in Face (iOS) 82

Independent
Location: Denmark
www.bluecarrotgames.com
@BlueCarrotGames on Twitter

100

EASYGAMESTATION

161,777pts
17

STUDIO'S 2010 RELEASE:
Recettear: An Item Shop's Tale (PC) 82

Independent
Location: Japan
egs.cug.net

In association with

metacritic

Keeping score of entertainment.

1-100

POS	STUDIO	LOCATION	PAGE
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4	SCE Santa Monica	USA	20
5	Blizzard Entertainment	USA	22
6	Media Vision	Japan	24
7	1337 Game Design	Sweden	26
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9	Rockstar Leeds	UK	30
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45	Three Rings	USA	77
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47	Revolution	UK	79
48	Treehouse	Finland	80
49	Majic Jungle Software	New Zealand	81
50	Sanzaru Games	USA	82

1-100

POS	STUDIO	LOCATION	PAGE
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52	2K Marin	USA	83
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And Yet It Moves	Wii	83	Broken Rules	89	95
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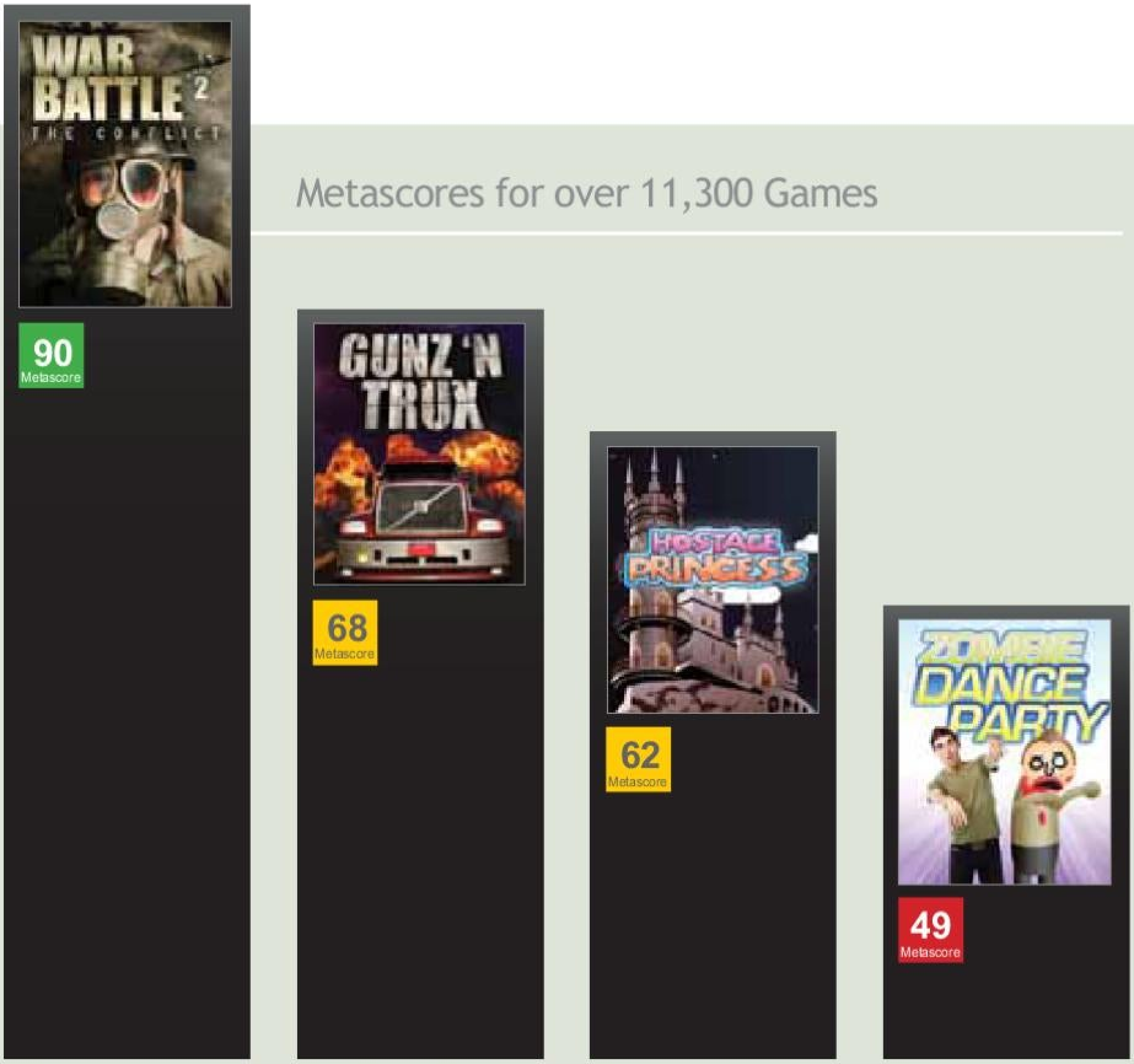
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